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PAGES 6-8

THE TIMES

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28 1998

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Queen for equality in line to Throne

By James Landale, Political Reporter

THE QUEEN has made it known that she backs government plans that would introduce sexual equality into the line of succession to the Throne. In an unprecedented move, a Labour minister told the House of Lords yesterday that she "had no objection" to ending the 800-year-old tradition of royal primogeniture under which the eldest son of the monarch automatically becomes heir even if he has an elder sister.

The announcement caused uproar in the Lords as peers protested that parliamentary rules forbade anybody referring to the opinions of the monarch and using them to influence debate.

It is the first time the Queen has publicly signalled that she is prepared to accept some limited constitutional reform of the monarchy.

Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare has been driving the campaign for an end to royal primogeniture with his Succession to the Crown Bill.

Commonwealth Parliaments also needed to accept the move and the UK could not act unilaterally.

"A major constitutional measure of this sort ought properly to be the subject of a Government Bill," Lord Williams said. "We will be considering how best to carry this forward within Government and in consultation with the Royal Family."

He gave no indication of when any Bill would be introduced and Home Office officials could not confirm whether it would be within this Parliament. It is unlikely to be introduced for some years because of the packed legislative programme.

Lord Williams added: "I should make it clear straight away that before reaching a view, the Government of course consulted the Queen. Her Majesty had no objection to the Government's view that in determining the line of succession to the throne, daughters and sons should be treated in the same way. There can be no reason for not giving equal treatment to men and women in this respect." The Queen's consent was confirmed by Buckingham Palace.

He said the Government would look at other possible reforms to the royal succession laws, but made it clear that no other decisions had been made. There has been speculation that the law might be changed to allow an heir to the Throne to marry a Catholic.

"The Queen's permission has to be obtained before Parliament can consider any issues affecting the monarchy, and she gave that last year. But Palace officials emphasised that this was a procedural process and did not indicate any opinion on the substance of the Bill.

Lord Archer said: "I am absolutely delighted that the Government will be taking forward this Bill and I was obviously surprised that Her Majesty the Queen has become personally involved. This is a change which will ensure that the monarchy will last another century."

During Lord Williams's announcement, Lord Marlesford, a Tory, protested: "I had always understood that in this House it was not normal to make known the views of the monarch about legislation before the House."

Lord Williams replied: "This text has been specifically cleared with those to whom reference has been made. And I therefore resent any suggestion that I have done anything improper."

TYPICAL ARCHER. SAME STORY. DIFFERENT CHARACTERS.



which yesterday came up for second reading. But the Tory peer and novelist immediately withdrew his Bill after Lord Williams of Mostyn, the Home Office Minister, announced that the Government would bring forward similar legislation with the endorsement of the Queen.

Lord Archer's Bill would have no impact on the current line of succession and would not affect the Princess Royal. Any change would come into effect only when Prince William became king and had children. If his eldest child was a girl, she would automatically become heir to the throne, even if she had younger brothers. It would not change any laws affecting hereditary peers.

Lord Williams said the Government had decided to act because it did not think it was right for royal primogeniture to be changed through a Private Peer's Bill. The Royal Family had to be consulted on such a change. He said



Eric Clapton and his daughter Ruth: He says getting to know her brought him back from "the edge of the world"

Clapton works to reform addicts

By Dominic Kennedy

ERIC CLAPTON, the rock guitarist and reformed hell-raiser, has become a volunteer worker at a drugs and alcohol clinic, persuading addicts that if total abstinence is good enough for him, they can also give up.

The artist nicknamed "God" now devotes as much energy to counselling sessions and leading discussion groups at a London clinic as he does to playing his guitar.

Clapton, whose five-year-old son Conor died when he fell from a 53rd floor New York apartment, discloses that he was brought back from "the edge of the world" by getting to know his daughter Ruth, conceived during a romance in Montserrat.

He has also spoken for the first time about his affection for the singer Sheryl Crow, the chances of them getting back together, and his hopes that, at 53, he might become a father again.

He condemns much of Britpop as "children's music", saying that the bands may try to look tough but their records sound like Freddie and the Dreamers.

In an interview with *The Times Magazine* today, Mr Clapton says that after recovering from a disastrous journey through life, it became vital for him to give something back to others. He works anonymously as he can at the addiction clinic.

Clapton is creating his own 36-bed addiction clinic in Antigua, where he has a home. It opens in July, and will cater for wealthy western addicts and poor islanders.

Interview by Alan Franks, *Magazine*, page 16

Times magazine writer wins Columnist of the Year award

The *Times Magazine's* John Diamond was yesterday named Columnist of the Year in the annual press awards presented by Granada Television's *What the Papers Say*. His weekly light-hearted account of his personal life has been made even more poignant over the last year by his battle with throat cancer.



In his column on page 91 of today's *Times Magazine*, he writes: "People don't seem to be able to get their heads round the idea of my not being able to eat. They look at me with bewildered eyes, as if I've told them that for the next six months or so I won't be breathing."

WEATHER	32
CROSSWORD	32
COURT & SOCIAL	24
LETTERS	23, 61
OBITUARIES	25
SIMON JENKINS	22
THEATRES	21
BUSINESS NEWS	27-31
UNIT TRUSTS	48
SHARE PRICES	26
MONEY	49-64
SPORT	35-43
WEEKEND	
GARDENING	13-15
PROPERTY	8-10
TRAVEL	25-33
FAITH	24

Lockerbie ruling favours Libya

Britain has lost the first round in a battle with Libya over the trial of two men accused of the Lockerbie bombing. The International Court of Justice ruled that Libya was entitled to ask whether the trial could be held there instead of in Scotland or America Page 16

Court quashes Clegg conviction

Paratrooper Lee Clegg last night said that he was determined to clear his name after a judge at the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal quashed his conviction for the murder of a teenage girl shot dead at an Army checkpoint and ordered a retrial Page 2

Alliance offers £550m deal

Alliance & Leicester, the building society that became a bank yesterday offered more than a million shareholders the prospect of a £550 million share buyback. The shares have risen to 964p from 542p since flotation Page 28

Ministers in disarray as country invades London

By Jill Sherman, Michael Hornsby and Nicholas Wood

THE Government last night sought to discredit tomorrow's countryside march through central London after ministers were in disarray over whether to attend the event, expected to attract up to 200,000 people.

Michael Meacher, the Environment Minister, announced at the last minute that he would join the protest. But last night he gave a warning in a letter to the Countryside Alliance, the organisers, that he was only going on the understanding that the march was not just about foxhunting.

Earlier Elliot Morley, a junior Agriculture Minister, pulled out of the event claiming it had been "hijacked" by the blood sports lobby and the Conservative Party.

Amid the ministerial confusion, the rally also faced a threat of violent disruption after the British National Party said it was bringing in supporters by bus to confront any counter-demonstrators opposed to foxhunting.

Government officials said Mr Meacher had decided to

go on the march because the protest had initially been planned to highlight all countryside problems. But they insisted that his presence would not amount to blanket support for the rally's aims.

Tony Blair has spent the last week trying to pacify the countryside lobby by announcing a series of U-turns on right to roam legislation, financial help for farmers and new targets to protect green-belt sites.

Although personally opposed to foxhunting, the Prime Minister had appeared to be sympathetic to the protesters' concerns.

But with William Hague and ten other Shadow Cabinet members set to join the march and heighten its party political significance, ministers were last night busily distancing themselves from the event, despite Mr Meacher's involvement.

The backpedalling appeared to be designed to mask the disarray earlier in the day when Mr Morley attacked the

march at the same time as Mr Meacher was saying he would be going.

Mr Morley said on BBC radio: "If we were represented officially on this march, then it would be demonstrated as government support for blood sports. That is not our position. It is a free vote issue. I believe many people who go on the march will also be misrepresented."

The Tories seized on the Government's confusion with Tim Yeo, the Shadow Environment Minister, saying that ministers appeared "scared" to show their faces to country people. He added: "Even if they do put in an appearance it will scarcely be enough to allay the fears of those who live in the countryside." Jack Cunningham said.

Continued on page 2, A1

Countryside march 6-8
Simon Jenkins, page 22
Leading article and letters, page 23
Photograph, page 32
Weekend, page 19

Dome game gives children taste of the futures

By Dominic Kennedy

CHILDREN will don the garish jackets of City traders, mimic their shouting and gestures and have the chance to become virtual millionaires playing a new computer game being prepared for the Millennium Dome at Greenwich.

The chance to become a "Master of the Universe", moving pretend pounds, dollars and euros across the globe, crushing currencies and building empires, is part of a £12 million

public relations exercise for the City. The game, a sort of third millennium Monopoly, is based on the training real traders undergo when they prepare for work on the floor of the boisterous and colourful international financial futures market, LIFFE.

Children all over the world would be able to play the interactive trading game on the Internet. Like best-selling computer games such as *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Super Mario*, players would advance through levels of

difficulty, but to play at level ten a visit to the Dome would be necessary. There, children could don those colourful jackets worn by traders on the exchange and test their skills against the computer.

Every day, 3,500 traders at LIFFE shout and scream wildly on the 40,000 sq ft floor, clambering around pits devoted to buying and selling everything from coffee futures to Italian government bonds. They daily trade £178 billion and learn their craft using simulated markets on a computer

game called Trademaker. Another game teaches them the complicated hand signals they must use to communicate at a distance.

The interactive virtual reality game is one of the ideas for the TansAction zone of the Dome, an area devoted to showing visitors how money and finance are changing the lives.

Tony Blair urged business leaders to back the Dome who he invited to them to an preview of contents on Tuesday. There is still £75 million shortfall in corporate sponsorship.

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NEXT WEEK IN THE TIMES

MONDAY UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT Full report on England v West Indies

TUESDAY Body and Mind Living with Bulimia

WEDNESDAY Inter//face

Plus: Crème - best for jobs Do women and DIY mix?

THURSDAY Films: The unveiling of Matt Damon in Good Will Hunting

Plus: Best for books Peter Ackroyd on Francis Bacon

FRIDAY Rock and pop: David Sinclair reviews Eric Clapton's latest album

SATURDAY In the 100-page glossy magazine KYLIE MINOGUE INTRODUCES 34 PAGES OF HOT NEW LOOKS FOR SPRING AND SUMMER

Country rally

Continued from page 1 Minister of Agriculture, had indicated that both Mr Morley and Lord Donoughue, another junior Agriculture Minister, would take part in the event. Lord Donoughue will attend only a pre-march breakfast at the Savoy. Downing Street tried to play down the rift by insisting that Mr Morley had been speaking in a personal capacity. But later, government officials changed their tune and started echoing Mr Morley's fears. Robin Hanbury-Tenison, the alliance's chief executive, rejected criticism that the march was a political stunt. "It is a marvellous mass movement. You would not get people in the countryside coming in London in these huge numbers if they did not feel very worried by the threat to their way of life," he said. Mr Hague will lead about half the Shadow Cabinet on the march. Shadow Cabinet participants will include Michael Howard, Sir Brian Mawhinney, Gillian Shephard, Sir Norman Fowler and Michael Jack, the Shadow Agriculture Minister. Conservative grandees Michael Heseltine and John Gummer, the former Environment Secretary, will also join the march. Celebrities supporting the march will include actors Anthony Andrews and Christopher Biggins. Countryside march, 68 Simon Jenkins, page 22 Leading article, page 23 Photograph, page 32 Weekend, page 18

Court of Appeal quashes Clegg's murder conviction

Security forces on alert after judge orders a retrial for paratrooper jailed over the death of a teenage joyrider, writes Martin Fletcher

SECURITY forces were on heightened alert last night after Northern Ireland's Court of Appeal quashed Paratrooper Lee Clegg's 1993 conviction for murdering a teenage joyrider in nationalist West Belfast.

Republican leaders spoke of widespread anger after Sir Robert Carswell, Northern Ireland's Lord Chief Justice, ordered a retrial that will give Lance Corporal Clegg the chance to clear his name.

Lord Carswell said new ballistic evidence showed that it was possible the shot with which Lance Corporal Clegg killed Karen Reilly, 18, was fired at the side, not the back, of the stolen car in which she was a backseat passenger. If so, that would suggest he was legitimately seeking to protect fellow soldiers and did not use excessive force when the car sped through a checkpoint. Lance Corporal Clegg was sentenced to life, and his release on licence two years later triggered riots in Belfast and Londonderry.

Lance Corporal Clegg, who was not in court, said in a statement at a press conference: "I am pleased that, as a result of my appeal to the Northern Ireland appeal court, I have been granted a retrial where my claim of my innocence can be heard. I would like to take the opportunity to thank my family, solicitor and the Clegg committee, and all those who have supported me over the last eight years." His mother, Wynne Johnson, said the ruling was the best he could have hoped for, and if another trial was "the only way Lee's going to prove his innocence, that's what it will have to be."

The ruling means he is assumed innocent unless reconvicted in his new trial. Likely to be held later this year, although he would receive a mandatory life sentence if convicted again, the Northern Ireland Secretary would probably order his immediate release.

Miss Reilly's father, Sean, appealed for calm but still believed that Lance Corporal Clegg was guilty. He accused him of "dragging out the legal process to the very limit. As a result, our nightmare at the death of our daughter has continued unabated."

Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein's president, claimed that the ruling was "a green light to members of the British Crown forces that they can kill Irish civilians with impunity."

Lance Corporal Clegg and other soldiers fired 19 shots at the stolen Vauxhall Astra as it sped through a checkpoint at night on September 20, 1990. They killed Miss Reilly and the driver, Martin Peake, 17. Members of the patrol fabricated evidence to suggest that the car had hit a soldier.

Lance Corporal Clegg, now 30 and a physical education instructor at Catterick Barracks, had two previous appeals rejected. Campaigners in Britain collected more than a million signatures demand-



Clegg yesterday: he said he was pleased to have the chance to argue his innocence

ing his release. In 1995 Sir Patrick Mayhew, then the Northern Ireland Secretary, freed him on licence, and he was allowed to resume his career with the 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment. In January 1997 Sir Patrick granted him leave to appeal a third time after his solicitors produced fresh ballistic evidence to suggest that it was the

side shot that killed Miss Reilly, and the one fired at the car's rear fragmented without hitting her.

Lord Carswell heard expert testimony from both sides over 13 days last month. In a 34-page ruling, he said the prosecution had not shown that theory to be "impossible for a court to accept". The conviction was "unsafe".

David Trimble, the leader of the Ulster Unionists, warned of the "very great concern" that Sinn Fein would be allowed back to the peace talks on March 9. He issued a thinly-veiled threat that Unionists would make a highly visible but unspecified protest after a meeting with Tony Blair at Downing Street yesterday.

British arms journalist was unlawfully killed

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A JOURNALIST found suffocated in a hotel cupboard in Chile had been unlawfully killed, a Devon coroner recorded yesterday.

The verdict ended an eight-year campaign by Tony Moyle to establish the truth behind his son Jonathan's death despite attempts at a cover-up by the Chilean authorities aided, he claimed last night, by Britain.

Jonathan Moyle, 28, a former RAF pilot who edited Defence Helicopter World, was found dead in March 1990 as he prepared to expose a Chilean arms manufacturer's deal to supply helicopter gunships to Iraq. Mr Moyle was found hanging by his shirt from the rail in a walk-in wardrobe with a pillow case over his head.

Despite attempts by Chilean police to claim that he had committed suicide or died during an auto-erotic act, neither his father nor the investigating judge believed them. Tony Moyle said after the



Moyle investigating sale of arms to Iraq

verdict last night: "I feel that my son has been vindicated. I am confident that justice has been done with this verdict. I don't think the two professional hitmen who carried out the killing will ever be caught but the man I suspect ordered it is now dead himself, which I suppose is justice of a kind."

The Chilean arms firm Cardoen Industries had developed equipment to convert civilian helicopters into gunships. Iraq, which was subject of an international arms embargo, wanted to buy more than 100 in a deal worth at least £200 million to Cardoen. Mr Moyle's interest threatened to wreck the deal which was being negotiated four months before Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Toxicology tests on the contents of Jonathan Moyle's stomach revealed that he had been sedated within two hours of his death though there were no signs of any pills in his room.

Last year the Chilean authorities reopened the criminal investigation into Mr Moyle's death, which is being led by two Chilean judges. After the inquest a Foreign Office spokesman said: "We will note and digest the Coroner's verdict and comments but we will not make any further comment until the result of an inquiry in Santiago has been completed."

'Burglar' killed by police was in his own flat

By HELEN JOHNSTONE

A MAN shot dead by a police marksman after being mistaken for an armed burglar was in his own home and had a fake gun, it emerged last night.

Bedfordshire Police defended the actions of the officer who shot Michael Fitzgerald, 32, a track maintenance worker, as he brandished the replica gun at a window. The officer has been taken off firearm duties but has not been suspended.

The incident was the first in which Bedfordshire Police had fired a shot since its officers were armed 13 years ago. The Police Complaints Authority is to oversee an investigation into the shooting by the Assistant Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police.

Anthony Howlett-Bolton, Bedfordshire's Assistant Chief Constable, said Mr Fitzgerald was killed by a shot in the chest after police were called to

"a burglary in progress" in Bedford by a man with a handgun.

Negotiations were carried out by telephone but Mr Fitzgerald brandished a gun at a window despite being repeatedly warned that he was surrounded by armed officers. Mr Howlett-Bolton said: "When the man leant out of a first-floor window and pointed the gun at an armed officer, the decision was taken to fire."

John Betterton, 32, a scientist whose home was used by armed police to watch Mr Fitzgerald's flat, said: "I heard a gunshot. Everything went quiet after that. It wasn't Hollywood style, all guns blazing."

Rosa Galetta, 33, a mother of three, said a woman had left Mr Fitzgerald's flat to call the police. "When they came he was waving a gun at everybody. My children were very frightened."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Windsor auction raises £14.5m

The auction of memorabilia from the estate of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor ended at Sotheby's in New York yesterday with \$23.35 million (£14.5 million) raised. The total for above Sotheby's estimate of \$7 million, will go to a charity set up by Mohammed Al Fayed, in the names of Diana, Princess of Wales, and his son Dodi. The auction house said that prices in all the 18 sessions had exceeded expectations.

Ban lifted

The Court of Session in Edinburgh yesterday granted Pat Lally, Lord Provost of Glasgow, and Alex Mason, deputy Lord Provost, interim orders temporarily lifting their 18-month suspension from the Labour Party.

Vaccine alarm

Large numbers of parents contacted doctors and health workers after research suggested a possible link between autism and the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine. The Health Department defended the vaccine.

Food labelling

Food manufacturers and retailers have agreed guidelines for labelling on packaged food and drink showing fat and calorie content per serving. The proposals were revealed by the Institute of Grocery Distribution.

Drug acquittal

Gary Robinson, 41, former head of police at Luton, was acquitted of a charge of supplying drugs to a police officer. He was acquitted at Manchester Crown Court yesterday.

Early exit

General practitioner Nicholas Harrison, 47, was granted leave to return to his home in Devon after being arrested on suspicion of supplying drugs to a police officer. He was acquitted at Manchester Crown Court yesterday.

Old 50 goes

The old 50 coin is officially withdrawn from circulation at midnight tonight. The Royal Mint estimates that only 10 million remain in use. All coins handed into banks will be melted and recycled.

Winds death

A driver died when his car overturned near Morpeth, Northumberland, as winds swept the North. The roof was blown off a school in Leeds and a plane was forced off the runway at Leeds Bradford airport.

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How Felicitas might have been Queen

Alan Hamilton imagines how royal history might have worked out under a law of equal succession

THE prospect of a change in the law of succession to admit the monarch's firstborn regardless of sex offers a chance to play the intriguing game of "What if...?"

What if the Prince of Wales and his sons, William and Harry, decided to desert the family to Tahiti and become painters? Under present law, the succession would pass to the Queen's next son, the Duke of York, bringing with it some touchy questions of who should be queen consort.

But if the proposed change in the law were in force, the succession would pass to the next born, the Princess Royal, who is ten years older than Andrew. There is a body of opinion that would regard such an outcome as no bad thing.

The Government has taken Lord Archer's Succession to the Crown Bill on board and the Queen has signalled her consent, perhaps largely because it will have no direct implications for decades to come. The Queen's heir apparent is Charles, male and firstborn, and his heir apparent is William, also male and

FIRST TAKES ALL

Primoogeniture — eldest son takes all — has its origins among the kings of medieval England and has governed not only succession to the throne but the inheritance of property. Traditionally it has not applied if a deceased landowner's children are all female, when the eldest becomes a co-heiress with all her sisters. On the death of George VI, a correspondent in *The Times* suggested that, because he had no sons, his daughters Elizabeth and Margaret should reign jointly. Parliament rejected the idea.

firstborn. Should fate intercede to prevent William being king, there is still Harry. At the earliest, the changed law would affect the children of Prince William.

But what if equal right of succession were already a

long-established fact? It would be necessary to rewind history for the best part of a century for it to have made any difference.

George VI had only daughters, so Elizabeth II had no rival. George V's eldest was a male, Edward VIII, and his second was also a male, George VI. Edward VII's first was a male, Prince Albert, Duke of Clarence, who predeceased his father. His second was also a male, who became George V. No problem there.

If — and this is an enormous if — equality had reigned at the time of Edward VIII's abdication, and George VI had refused the throne as he tried so hard to do, the next in line would have been Princess Mary, the Princess Royal.

That might have meant that the present monarch would have been George, 7th Earl of Harewood, and the Queen his present wife, the Australian Patricia Tuckwell. On the other hand, he might not have divorced, in which case our present queen consort would have been his first wife, Marion Stein, who left him to marry the former Liberal leader, Jeremy Thorpe.

Had sexual equality of succession applied in Queen Victoria's day, things could have been more plausibly different. The eldest child of our longest-reigning monarch was Victoria, the Princess Royal, born in 1840, a year before the future Edward VII. Vickie married the German emperor Frederick III and between them they gave birth to the future Kaiser, Wilhelm II. Could the First World War have been avoided?

"An interesting theory but highly unlikely," David Williamson, co-editor of *DeBrett's Peerage*, said yesterday. "Had Vickie been heir to the throne, she would never have gone and married the head of another European royal house — there would have been far too many complications."

Still, had that line been followed, the occupant of Buckingham Palace today would be Princess Felicitas of



Queen Victoria's eldest child was Victoria, the Princess Royal, left. She married a German emperor and their son became Kaiser Wilhelm II, right. What if young Victoria had followed her mother to the British throne?



also died childless. It then passed to Henry's younger daughter, Elizabeth I, who in her turn died without heirs.

Elizabeth's death in 1603 caused a court messenger to ride to Edinburgh in the world record time of three days to offer the throne to the next living Tudor descendant, James VI of Scotland.

Again, no problem there. The wisest fool in Christendom rode to London as James I of Great Britain, commissioned a new translation of the Bible, launched a campaign against smoking and died in 1625, leaving a daughter as his eldest child.

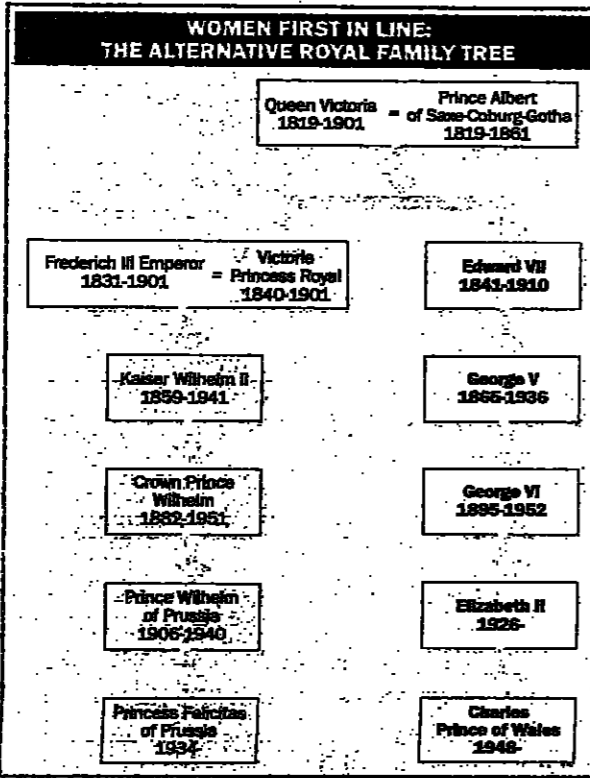
Sexual equality would have James I being succeeded by Elizabeth of Bohemia, the so-called Winter Queen, because she found herself on the throne of what is now the Czech republic for barely a year. But primogeniture dictated that the Stuart line was continued by James's second child, the ill-fated Charles I.

By a quirk of history governed by religion, Elizabeth's daughter, Sophia, Electress of Hanover, ensured the succession of the British throne through her son, George I. Sophia was not the eldest child, not even the eldest daughter, but she was the only Protestant in the family, and Protestants is what they demanded after the 1701 Act of Settlement.

Changing the law in Britain will bring the House of Windsor more in line with continental practice. Sweden's throne is fully reformed, and the next monarch in Stockholm will be Crown Princess Victoria. Norway has changed in principle, although King Harald's firstborn is Crown Prince Haakon Magnus. Denmark and The Netherlands are fully reformed, and both have queens, although in both cases the firstborn waiting to succeed is a male.

Spain and Belgium are committed to equality, although not for the next generation. Indeed, the only throne in Europe, besides that of Britain, which clings to the Salic law of male-only succession is the Crown Prince of Liechtenstein.

Republicans may sneer at the arcane nature of it all, but we are still awaiting a female incumbent at either the White House or the Elysee.



Paul Burrell, butler to Diana, Princess of Wales, welcomes a group of young leukaemia patients to Kensington Palace yesterday. The children, including Arwen Hoskins, 12, left, and Rachel Harper, 13, travelled from Wales to lay daffodils at the palace gates in the Princess's memory.

ry. They presented Mr Burrell, who helped to organise the trip, with a miner's lamp. For some of the children, aged 10 to 16, it was the first time in months that they had left Llandough Hospital in Penarth. They decided to visit over the St David's Day weekend after hearing that the

Princess had planned to visit the hospital with Prince William. Miss Harper, from Cardiff, said: "Diana was so brilliant and it is special to be able to give something back. Mr Burrell was so kind and understanding and because he knew her so well it was almost like meeting Diana."

Sir Cliff to headline musical celebration of Princess's life

By DANIEL MCGROVEY

SHOWBUSINESS friends of Diana, Princess of Wales, including Sir Cliff Richard and Chris de Burgh, will headline the tribute concert that could raise £1 million for her memorial fund.

The 15,000 tickets costing between £30 and £50 will go on sale today for the concert to be held at the family estate at Althorp. Earl Spencer, the Princess's brother, said it was "an entirely fitting way to celebrate her life; music was Diana's passion".

Organisers expect a major corporation to sponsor the event, which will take place on June 27, the Saturday before what would have been her 37th birthday on July 1. The performers were chosen by the earl as being among his sister's favourites and will include Wet Wet Wet, Lesley Garrett, Julian Lloyd Webber, Jimmy Nail and the Chicken

Shed Theatre Company. The earl is about to sign a deal for it to be shown live on television worldwide.

Sir Elton John, Sir Paul McCartney, George Michael, Phil Collins and the Spice Girls apologised that they had prior engagements. Luciano Pavarotti might appear, depending on his health, and the earl is hopeful of attracting other names.

The line up will also include Andrea Bocelli, New College Choir, the Royal Academy of Music and the Soweto String Quartet.

The five-hour concert is expected to be one of the most lucrative charity events staged in Britain with video and CD sales. It will finish at about midnight with a fireworks display.

Lord Spencer said: "I am grateful to all the performers, some of them personal friends



of Diana's, who have kindly agreed to take part in this diverse concert. I know they, like me, very much hope that a significant sum will be made for the memorial fund."

The event is to be staged in the Deer Park at Althorp, which is about a mile from the island where the Princess is

buried. Concert-goers will not be allowed access to that area.

Promoters and organisers say the price was fixed to reflect the "commercial going rate". A spokesman said "£60 would be nearer the commercial rate but given that people have to drive to Northampton the earl wanted to charge less, given this is for a good cause."

A spokesman for the earl said tickets would be sold via Ticketmaster (on 0870 900 9933) or via The Dergate Theatre in Northampton. Ticketmaster charges a £1.50 booking fee. Tickets will be limited to four per purchase.

Academics are to study the significance and meaning of the public outpouring of grief over the Princess's death.

Tony Walter, reader in sociology at Reading University, is leading 18 anthropologists, psychologists, folklorists and media experts on how the world behaved for two weeks last September.

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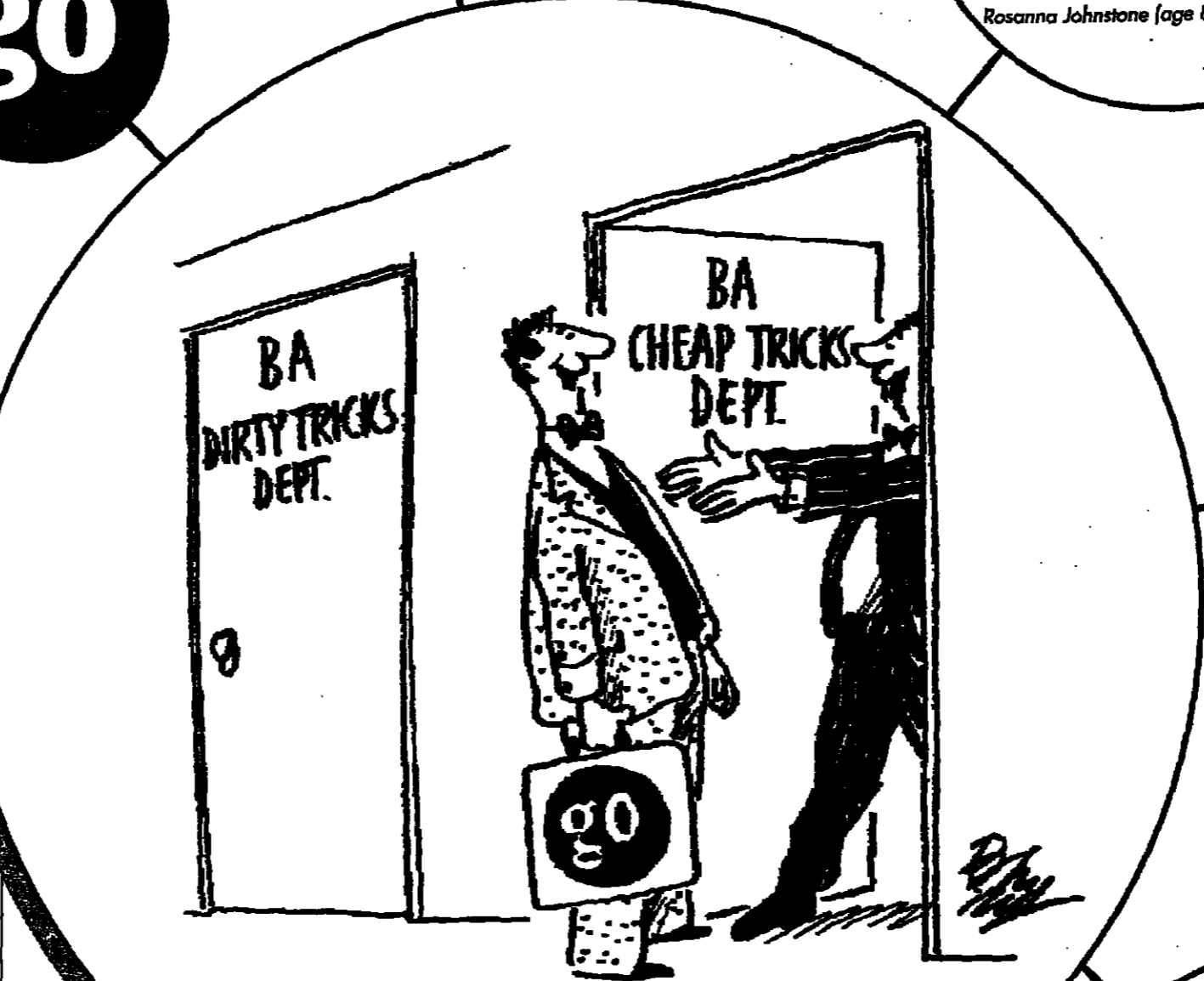
go

Dear easyJet
 Q. What is the difference between a BA flight and a Go flight?
 A. One scr... customers while the other scr... competitors.
 (Mr) G D Shattock, Peterborough

Dear easyJet
 My daddy is always moaning about the big business forcing the little man out of business. My daddy lost his business three years ago and he was very sad. He says that BA behave unfairly and he calls them names. He says I should write to you with my support. He has told me about Freddie Laker, Virgin and now easyJet. I will tell my teacher and friends about it as well.
 Good luck. **Rosanna**
 Rosanna Johnstone (age 8) Culcheth

The Ballad of Ayling Bob
 Fares high,
 Market slipping,
 Career awry
 Profits dipping.
 Move to 'Go',
 Fies in skies,
 Stoop real low,
 Cross-subsidise.
 Rivals go,
 Sold a pup,
 Status quo,
 Fares go up!
 Peter Scott-Smith
 Bury St. Edmunds

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 John Jenkins
 East Lothian

Thank you all for your continued support in easyJet's battle against the new BA cheap trick, and for the thousands of faxes we received in response to our Beauty and the Beast campaign.

The ad invited readers to fax their views about BA's latest "cheap trick" airline "go". Here are six of the best responses, who each win a pair of free flights on easyJet. Congratulations to the other four prize winners (J D Statham, G Ferguson, R L Cole, J Harrhy), and we're sorry their entries did not fit on this page.

easyJet are determined to fight the BA cheap trick all the way to the High Court and beyond if necessary. A writ was served on British Airways by easyJet on Thursday 26th February 1998. For the full text please refer to our website www.easyjet.com.

In our efforts to prove the cross subsidy of 'go' by BA, we need all the help we can get. If you have evidence of such behaviour by BA or any other 'BA trick' please fax us on 01582 - 445588 (strict confidence guaranteed for BA staff)

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 someone should give their wings a clip,
 It really isn't very fair
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 First they target Freddie Laker
 then it was Branson some years later,
 Anyone gets in their way
 They say: "There's only room for us, B.A!"
 Well listen here... you won't succeed
 by making competition bleed,
 remember David and his sling
 he slayed Goliath and became a king.
 Soon all will change, oh yes indeed
 when easyJet and their like succeed,
 B.A. will suffer a mighty blow
 as we passengers turn away from "Go".
 Stephen Benson
 Blandford, Dorset



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THE COUNTRYSIDE MARCH



Concessions followed last year's countryside march but the Prime Minister has failed to convince that his concerns go more than Barbour-deep

Blair finds red and green hard to match

SHORTLY after he became Prime Minister, Tony Blair was photographed in an artless pose strolling through the Chilterns in Barbour and boots. He was walking, alone with his thoughts, through the hinterland around his country house, Chequers. The impression he wished to create was transparent—a relaxed, informal son of the soil. One thornproof jacket does not, however, a countryman make and this week has seen Mr Blair trying to prove that his personal hinterland stretches beyond NI and SW.

The Countryside March tomorrow has provoked conflicting reactions within the Government. Elliot Morley, junior Agriculture Minister, has refused to attend, claiming the march has been "hijacked by the bloodsports lobby". In contrast, his departmental colleague, Lord Donoughue, who opposes a ban on foxhunting, will breakfast with the marchers while the rambler's friend, the Environment Minister Michael Meacher, will mingle with the crowds in Hyde Park.

The Prime Minister has tried to remain simultaneously aloof and engaged, the champion of the countryside but not the prisoner of the marchers. He has tried to appease rural anger with a series of initiatives that have given the impression of concern without conceding on the issues that most animate the



The Prime Minister found that where there's muck there's votes, but Labour has yet to reward the support, writes Michael Gove

protest's organisers. The march is about much more than saving traditional country sports. The organisers say it is a protest about "unsympathetic rural development, the decline of rural services, statutory controls over private land and the decline in farming incomes precipitated by the BSE crisis and the strength of the pound".

It is, however, hunting that has galvanised the organisers and crystallised the perception that this Government is unsympathetic to rural life, as Janet George, march organiser, argues: "The march would not be happening if it were not for the anger over hunting."

Mr Blair has, on his own road to Hyde Park, executed a series of smart reverses, twisting policy to appease but never directly retreating. He maintains that "I really do not believe that support for the private member's Bill [to ban hunting with hounds] can be equated with the end of the countryside". In the past week

his Government has tried to stuff rural mouths with goodies. On Monday John Prescott announced a shift in house-building strategy designed to preserve more of the green belt by increasing the proportion of new homes designated for urban "brownfield" sites.

On Wednesday the edge was taken off "right to roam" proposals, which landowners feared would lead to property rights being trampled over. After extensive consultation with the Country Landowners' Association, a voluntary system of access was proposed to forestall the need for legislation.

On the same day, farmers were treated to largesse by their tormentor Jack "Boots" Cunningham. He announced that the £35 million required to introduce a cattle tracing system to combat BSE would now be found by the Government, rather than extracted from farmers. Another £35 million would be found to implement extra controls at abattoirs.

And on Thursday all these gifts were accompanied by a *billet-doux* to country dwellers sent with particular care.

When the Editor of *Country Life* was rung by No 10 in the middle of last week he knew that the Prime Minister was more than ordinarily anxious to appease the gumbotied legions preparing to march on London. The country house journal of the tweedy tendency has been unsparing in its criticism of the Government's neglect of rural concerns and the PM was keen to, if not defuse, at least deflect the anger.

Mr Blair had used *Country Life* before the election to establish his rural credentials and the photograph that graced that article also accompanied his piece this week. In immaculate white shirt and *avant-garde* tie the Prime Minister looks ruminatively at the camera while some, placidly sane, cattle decorate the background.

In his piece the Prime

Minister tries to root himself in the land but the magazine's leading article, under the title *It won't do, Mr Blair*, is left asking where's the beef?

The Prime Minister makes much of his constituency, Sedgefield in Co Durham, "a microcosm of Britain; rural as well as urban". But for all its broad acres Durham is not really county. The villages that make up Mr Blair's constituency, while possessed of charm, owe their past prosperity to coal, not wool; they are out of D. H. Lawrence, not Surtees.

The middle classes in Co Durham tend to be provincial professionals, commuting to Teesside and Tyne-side or attached to the light industries of new towns, rather than the Archers of the North. When the late John Smith visited Sedgefield in 1984 he remarked that it was "a bit of a brown ale and daret constituency". It is definitely not part of the cider or gin and tonic belt.

The new Labour Party that springs from Sedgefield is more sensitive to English country concerns than, say, the Hampstead party of Gait-skell and Wilson or the Celtic alliance led by Kinnock and Smith but it is not as embedded in the shires as Labour was in the Forties. Atlee's Agriculture Minister, Tom Williams, was known as "the farmer's friend" and the rationing regime of his govern-

COUNTRY STRIFE

Vol I No1 FEBRUARY 28, 1998



The Rt. Hon. ANTHONY BLAIR, PM
The Rt. Hon. Anthony Blair, the younger son of Mr. Leo and the late Mrs. Hazel Blair, is seen with his wife Cherie meeting young rural people at the Old Macdonald's Outdoor Pursuits College where he was awarded grade U in the Turning Championship

ment kept food prices steady and countrymen happy.

With the steady movement of population, and votes, to built-up areas, Labour became estranged from the concerns of the countryside but the scale of the election landslide saw Labour MPs returned for rural seats. The new members, although keen to keep their new voters' allegiance, do not tend to have much mud on their boots.

New rural MPs such as Diana Organ in the Forest of Dean, who sits on the Agriculture Select Committee, and Kali Mountford in Colne Valley are public-sector professionals, a former teacher and civil servant, respectively. The chair of Labour's Rural Group of MPs, Peter Bradley, member for The Wrekin, is a Westminster councillor and PR consultant.

The bundle of concessions that rural Labour MPs can take from the Government to their new constituents is an honest attempt to feel rural pain but the refusal of new Labour to allow country-dwell-

ers the run of their land in traditional fashion still grates. Money for abattoirs is welcome but it is the slow death of country traditions that really hurts.

Although Labour may sincerely wish to address the countryside's concerns, the accent in which it does so is still overwhelmingly urban.

Simon Jenkins, page 22
Leading article and Letters, page 23
Photograph, page 32
Weekend, pages 18, 19

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THE COUNTRYSIDE MARCH

The last surviving staghunt is ready to defend its corner

ON A fine spring day a Jeep tows a blue horsebox into a field in the rich green countryside of Co Meath, northwest of Dublin. Some large animal is clattering around inside.

Two men throw open the doors and out bursts a magnificent stag. It leaps high into the air, as if to celebrate its freedom, then bounds off down the field, breaks through a hedge and vanishes.

Ten minutes later 70 huntsmen ride into the field with a pack of hounds. A blast of a horn and the dogs are off, baying and yelping as they pick up the scent. Another minute and the Ward Union hunt streams by with a deafening thunder of hooves and not a saboteur in sight.

The 150-year-old Ward Union is a "corred" staghunt, meaning it raises its own stags and transports them to wherever the hunt is meeting. It is effectively the last such hunt in the British Isles, Northern Ireland's Co Down Stag-hounds having been stymied this season by public hostility and a ruling that their stags are domesticated and cannot be hunted.

With the Worcester MP Michael Foster's Bill to ban hunting with hounds — or similar legislation — likely to be enacted during this Parliament, the Ward Union could also soon find itself the last surviving staghunt of any sort. In 1930 there were eleven, today there are five.

Although country folk are descending on London for the Countryside March, no such demonstrations are necessary in Ireland. The Ward Union survives because there is far less of a gulf between town and country, and less class warfare, and because horses and hunting are seen as a way of life, not the preserve of an elite.

Unlike its English counterparts, the Ward Union also sponsors the stags. Britain has 60 million people in an industrialised country. We're four million in

Irish farmers are intent on keeping a traditional rural sport and its prey alive, writes Martin Fletcher

a rural country where there's a great background knowledge of the priorities and ways of the countryside." Philip O'Connor, the hunt chairman, said over a hefty breakfast in Dublin's Berkeley Court hotel.

The Irish Government is presently studying the hunt but Mr O'Connor is supremely confident its licence will be renewed. He argued that in 40 years of hunting he had not seen one stag killed, that the Ward Union conserved one of the few remaining herds of pure-bred Irish red deer, and that it was essentially a farmers' hunt from which only the faint-hearted were excluded. Indeed in the absence of large estates it depended on farmers' support. "Far from being apologetic we are immensely proud of our tradition," he declared.

Mr O'Connor's eyes lit up as he described the excitement of following a "brilliant animal" across open country, of leaping hedges and ditches, of the challenge between horse and rider, between rider and rider, and between rider and countryside, all interwoven in a pattern where stag is king — it's utterly exhilarating.

On this particular day the hunt is meeting in the picturesque village of Summerhill, and the scene could have come straight from Siegfried Sassoon's memoirs. The broad



Making a break for it: members of Co Meath's Ward Union staghunt release their quarry from a trailer. The specially raised stag is chased by horse and hounds but not killed

main street is lined with horse boxes, steeds are being saddled, and merry, ruddy-faced huntsmen are drinking hot toddies in the whitewashed pub.

The majority are indeed farmers, albeit well-to-do, for whom hunting fills the winter months when their land is dormant. But their numbers are swollen by wives, children on half-term break, a Dublin doctor, a retired pilot, a young jockey, even a large and jolly local priest who says hunting gives him a "common bond" with his flock. He jokes about saying "an act of contrition first thing in the morning in case I don't make it through the day".

These people know instinctively when to drift outside and the hunt sets off behind the blue horsebox, pursued by scores of spectators — including a couple of middle-aged Mexican tourists — in a bewildering array of four-wheeled vehicles and jalopies.

The hunt is fast and furious. The stag doubles back soon after its release, crosses Doyle's and Gargan's farms, cuts through a graveyard and lopes past the ruins of Dangan Castle, where the Duke of Wellington was born.

In no time the huntsmen are scattered across the fields or bunched at the lips of Co Meath's famously deep ditches. A riderless horse gallops past.

There is chaos in the lanes as vehicles career in all directions. Some, including the Mexicans in their rental car, actually bump across fields in their eagerness to spot the stag. Cars chase horses chas-

ing dogs chasing a stag in glorious Irish bedlam until suddenly, after just eight miles and 45 minutes, the hunt is over.

The stag has run into a farmyard, is cornered, and the huntsman calls off his hounds. As the animal is loaded into the horsebox for its journey home the mud-spattered,

bramble-bloodied riders trot cheerily back to Summerhill where a hunt supporter mocks another current British aversion by dispensing homemade oxtail soup.

One rider broke his shoulder but Pat Coyle, the huntsman, is thrilled that the hunt had to cross no fewer than four double ditches. The priest

enthuses about how "you're always guaranteed a great spin" with the Ward Union. Fernando Mariscal, one of the Mexicans, marvels at how the whole community turns out to help the hunt.

The Irish Council Against Blood Sports calls staghunting "an entirely barbaric and outdated activity" that should

have no place in a modern, civilised society. That view receives short shrift here. "This is not some wild charade where the animal is hunted into oblivion," Mr O'Connor protests.

The priest insists: "We don't kill anything. We're not sadistic. Within a couple of days the stag will be racing fit again."

Compared with bullfighting, concludes Senor Mariscal, it is mild.

There is, alas, no room for English exiles in the Ward Union.

It is fully subscribed and likely to remain so well into the 21st century, by which time it may itself be listed as an endangered species.

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HI-FI SYSTEMS SAVE UP TO £100 FINAL! REDUCTIONS

GRUNDIG Ultra-Compact CD Music Hi-Fi Model UM55. Was £119.99. **SALE PRICE £119.99**. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER.

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Mothers wrongly sacked for being ill

Two women win landmark ruling on maternity-leave rights that could affect thousands of workers, report Peter Foster and Agnes Bell

TWO mothers who were sacked after becoming too ill to return to work from maternity leave won a landmark ruling at the Court of Appeal yesterday.

The case, which has far-reaching implications for thousands of women struggling to combine family and career, was immediately hailed as a breakthrough in equal opportunities by trade unions.

Janet Greaves, 36, was dismissed from her job as a clerk at Kwik Save Stores in November 1994 after she returned to work to deliver a sick note. The company claimed that she had automatically terminated her contract because she had not been ready for work on the first day after her maternity leave.

Heather Cress, 42, suffered the same treatment from the Royal London Mutual Insurance Society when she sent a written notice saying she was unable to go back because of illness. She, too, was told she had not complied with the terms of the Employment Rights Act and was dismissed in May 1995.

However, yesterday Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, and two other senior judges ruled that the women had been unfairly dismissed, overturning a previous ruling by an Employment Appeal Tri-

bunal. Lord Justice Mummery said that Parliament had never intended that employers should be able to "take advantage of the temporary illness of a female employee to deny her the statutory right to return to work".

Kwik Save and Royal London Mutual Insurance were given leave to appeal to the House of Lords in recognition of the widespread implications of the case for working women. Trade unions estimate that more than 25,000 women every year are unable to return to work immediately after maternity leave due to ill health.

John Monks, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, welcomed the Court of Appeal's decision, saying: "This victory has great significance for all women workers who are treated unfairly when they become pregnant."

After the hearing both women, who were supported by their trade unions, said they had fought on behalf of all women who found themselves in similar situations. Mrs Cress, from Colchester, Essex, was overcome with tears of relief when the judgment was handed down. "It has been so difficult to make ends meet," she said.

She told how, after she suffered post-natal depression, her husband had been



Heather Cress, left, and Janet Greaves, second right, yesterday with their union representatives George McLean and Linda Sohawon

forced to give up his job as a chef to look after her and their three-year-old son, Stuart. "We have been living in a mobile home since August after we had to give up our home. Stuart also suffers from asthma," Mrs Cress said.

Mrs Greaves, from Gillesgate, Durham, lives with her husband Michael, 38 and their children Stephanie, 5, and Nicola, 3, and is now working part-time at a pet shop in Durham.

She said she been staggered to receive a letter of dismissal from Kwik Save after having worked for the company for nearly 17 years.

Mrs Greaves joined Kwik Save as a junior clerk in 1978

and by the time her first child was born in 1993 had become an assistant manager. She returned to work part-time before having a second child in 1994.

A difficult birth left Mrs Greaves unable to return because of back pain. In August 1994, on the day she was due to return to work, she

went to the store with a doctor's note declaring herself unfit for work. Five more medical certificates were supplied to Kwik Save but in November 1994 she was told that her contract had already been terminated because she had failed to exercise her right to return to work.

An industrial tribunal ruled that she had been unfairly dismissed but was overturned on appeal. Yesterday, more than three years after she was dismissed, the Court of Appeal overruled that decision.

If yesterday's judgment is not overturned in the Lords it is estimated that the women will receive between £5,000 and £10,000 compensation.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dryclean conman guilty

A conman who tried to make hotels pay for bogus drycleaning bills after claiming that a waiter had spilt food on his suit was given 158 hours' community service yesterday and ordered to pay £1,400 in costs. Simon Rossi, 33, from Twyford, Berkshire, who used the alias Charles Chastout-Morgan, was found guilty at Kingston-Crown Court.

Nuclear protest

Nordic ministers meeting in Gothenburg have protested to Britain about leaks from the reprocessing plant at Sellafield. Traces of nuclear waste have been found in shrimp in Norway.

Fairer city

O'Connell Street in Dublin is to be transformed from a run-down thoroughfare into a Champs Elysees-style boulevard of shops and restaurants. The £40 million refurbishment will take three years.

Drinker loses

William Joy, 37, of Cookstown, Co. Tyrone, who was paralysed after falling off a bar stool while drunk, has lost his £1 million damages claim in the High Court in Belfast.

Less ordinary

Ewan McGregor has been voted Best British Actor by readers of the film magazine Empire for the third time for A Life Less Ordinary. Kate Winslet won Best British Actress for Hamlet.

Pottery listed

The former home and workshop of the potter Bernard Leach have been given listed building status. Leach, who died in 1972, settled in St Ives, Cambridgeshire, in 1920 after returning from the Far East.

£8,000 cat

A cat worth £8,000 has been training Stuart and Connie Henderson of Swindon have offered £200 for the return of their pet. The cat may have been stolen from its kitchen.

CORRECTION

It was Gough Whitlam who won power for Labor in 1972, not Bob Hawke (B. A. Santora's obituary, yesterday).

£8,000 for actor burnt by hot pie

By EMMA WILKINS

A FORMER actor and ballroom dancer who was allegedly scarred for life by a scalding hot apple pie from McDonald's accepted £8,000 compensation yesterday.

Sheila Hughes, 37, required a year of hospital treatment for burns on her leg and suffered from depression. She fears she may never act or dance again.

Mrs Hughes, from Chorlton cum Hardy, Greater Manchester, was left in agony after she took her son Frederick, now 4, to a local McDonald's for a birthday treat in October 1995.

Mrs Hughes, who runs a private care home for the elderly, decided to sue McDonald's and reached an out-of-court settlement yesterday. "I've been through a lot of mental pain in the past two years and it's only now I feel I can get on with my life," she said. "I'm still embarrassed by

the scarring on my leg, and I believe it has damaged my chances of working again as a TV extra."

The apple-pie, which cost 70p, exploded and fell on to her leg as she celebrated her son's second birthday. "I wouldn't have normally gone to McDonald's, but it was a treat for him. I opened the apple pie, bit into it and it burst open at the bottom. It was like an apple liquid which went right down my leg. I was screaming and panicking."

McDonald's said: "Our main concern is always for the health and safety of our customers. On this occasion we have settled out of court without admission of liability."

Darren Miles received an undisclosed four-figure sum after he was scarred for life by a hot McDonald's apple pie. Mr Miles, 28, from Weybridge, Surrey, settled out of court in September 1995.

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Underwater worlds prove quite a catch

BRITAIN is entering the Age of Aquariums. Over the past five years they have become the fastest-growing tourist attractions.

Engineers are using new technology to build spectacular tanks with low costs and high box-office returns. Millions of gallons full of sharks and stingrays, with clear walkways that take visitors inside the sea, have replaced cramped and dirty aquariums patrolled by sorry-looking tropical fish.

Nature lovers who boycott zoos that keep animals in cramped conditions are being enticed by vast expanses of water, where many fish have as large a territory as they would in the wild. Start-up and running costs are low compared to theme parks and the rewards are lucrative. More than five million people spend up to £7 each on visiting an aquarium every year, feeding a booming industry worth millions of pounds.

There are more than 30 modern aquariums in Britain, double the number at the start of the decade, and they make up seven of the top 20 fee-paying attractions opened since 1992.

Four world-class establishments in London, Birmingham, Fife and Blackpool each sell more than 400,000 tickets a year. This summer will also mark the opening of the National Maritime Aquarium in Plymouth and the gigantic Blue Planet Aquarium in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, which cost £12 million to build and will be the largest in

Low starting-up costs and high box-office returns are making aquariums a growing attraction.

Mark Henderson tests the water

Europe. So great is their pulling power that increasing numbers of communities are following a trend in America, where aquariums have opened in numerous towns as a short-cut to urban regeneration.

The Ellesmere Port project received a £31 million grant from the European Union's Regional Development Fund. The reason is explained by a Coopers and Lybrand report on Deep Sea World in North Queensferry, near Edinburgh, parent company of Blue Planet.

The aquarium, which has a turnover of £1.5 million and had brought 300 jobs in related industries to the area, in addition to the 89 staff it employs in high season. Sea Life Centres' 15 seaside aquariums have brought new business to struggling resorts such as Scarborough, Hunstanton and Rhyl.

The vogue for aquariums is a vindication for Philip Crane, founder of Deep Sea World. When Mr Crane, inspired by modern aquariums in New Zealand, tried in the early 1990s to get a loan to start one in Scotland, he was turned down by all the major Scottish banks. After finding a handful

of backers, his shares in the company are now worth £5 million after a successful flotation on the Alternative Investments Market.

"It was an idea I knew would work, and I backed my judgment," he said. "The secret, he said, is getting people close to the wonders of nature."

"When you're in a tunnel with sharks skimming a few inches over your head, and see a 6ft cod flying past your face, it's hard not to be fascinated. Living things can give kids a buzz far greater than anything electronic," he said.

Mark Oakley, of Sea Life Centres, which have 16 aquariums attracting 3.5 million visitors a year, said the new model aquariums brought the world of Jacques Cousteau's underwater films to life. "It's as different from the old-style

aquarium as *Jaws* is from a goldfish," he said. "In Birmingham, you walk through a clear spherical tube surrounded by the sea and its creatures. It's a way into an unexplored world open only to a handful of skilled scuba divers."

The London Aquarium in County Hall features a Pacific Ocean tank holding a million gallons of water, containing sand tiger and brown sharks. An Atlantic tank holds a mere 700,000 gallons. The two main tanks occupy 170,000 square feet of floor space and rise three storeys high.

Chris Coode, education co-ordinator, thinks the aquarium boom is not yet over. "We are seeing such demand that I can see it growing for a little while yet. It isn't at saturation point, and as they get bigger and more impressive, more will be built."

Deep Sea World, North Queensferry, Fife, 01833 41880 (same number for information about Blue Planet Aquarium, Ellesmere Port); National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham, 0121 643 6777; London Aquarium, 0171 967 8000



Deep Sea World: "Living things can give kids a buzz far greater than anything electronic," Philip Crane says

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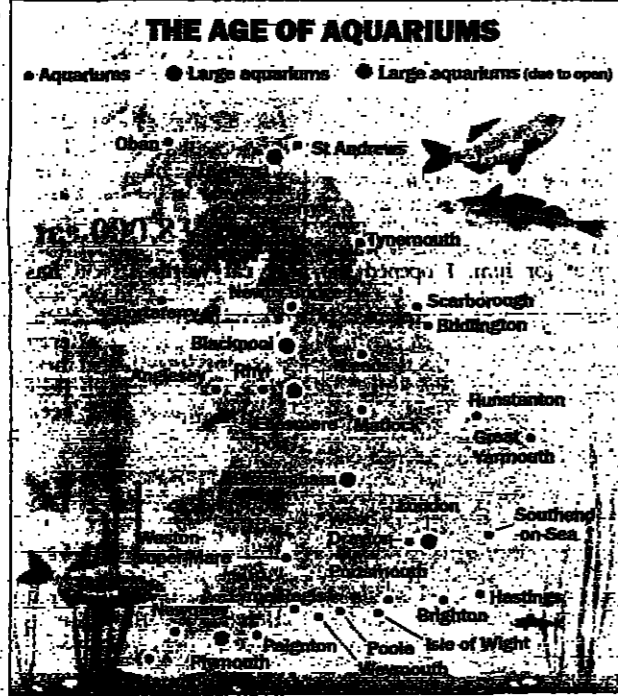
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Sperm shortage forecast if donor payments end

By IAN MURRAY

FERTILITY clinics will not be able to operate successfully if payments to sperm donors cease, experts said yesterday.

The Human Fertility and Embryology Authority, which regulates all clinics, wants to see an end to the present payments system, with donors coming forward inspired by altruism rather than money.

The authority believes that donors can be exploited and that children born from purchased sperm can end up being regarded as commodities. In a consultation paper sent to all clinics and patient groups, it calls for a change in culture so that donors will come forward in the same way as blood donors.

But Mark Hamilton, the meeting organiser and professor of gynaecology at Aberdeen University, said that, although altruism might be "the gold standard" demand was now exceeding

supply to such an extent that "maybe paid donation is the better option". Some had tried to recruit donors through publicity campaigns but it had not worked. About 11,000 sperm donors are needed each year to meet demand.

Although the maximum permitted payment at present is £15 plus reasonable expenses, that is enough to interest many young male students, who are ideal donors because they are young and virile.

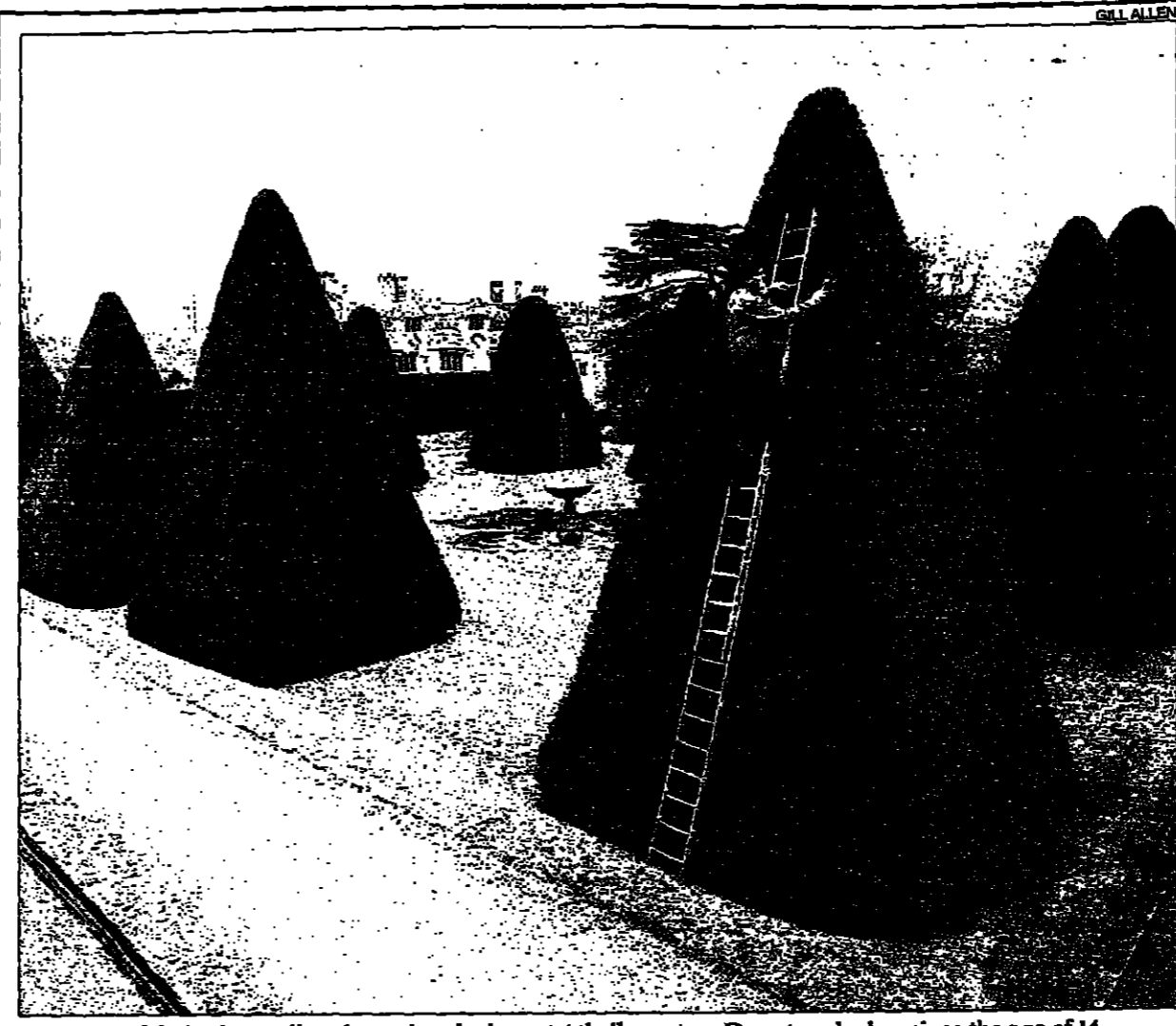
On ethical grounds the authority would rather have male donors who are from settled marriages with children of their own but a high proportion of that group are certain to be rejected because of lower sperm counts.

Advertisements are widely used to attract male donors but they owe their limited success to the fact that cash is paid to those who are able to

pass the rigorous tests to be accepted by a clinic. "We do not have enough donors for all our needs at the moment but if payments stop it will be very difficult indeed," said Emma Hopson, marketing manager of the Bridge Centre, a London sperm bank that supplies many fertility clinics round the country.

"Realistically it is going to be very difficult indeed to find donors prepared to come forward if there is no cash incentive," she added. Her clinic advertises once a month in a free magazine distributed widely in London.

Between 150 and 200 men telephone to make inquiries each time it appears. "Quite a few get cold feet and don't take it any further," she said. "It is very time consuming and requires a lot of effort for a small return. If the money wasn't there, even more would give up."



Patrick Cooke tending the topiary hedges at Athelhampton, Dorset, as he has since the age of 14

Garden award for Hardy's inspiration

By ROBIN YOUNG

A DORSET house that inspired Thomas Hardy has been voted by its visitors to have the best gardens of 1997. Their verdict has won the grounds of 18th-century Athelhampton an award from the Historic Houses Association.

Hardy, whose builder father worked on Athelhampton, set two poems there and painted a watercolour of it.

Over the past 20 years the gardens have been restored by the Cooke family, who have been living in the house since 1949. Their efforts have earned the 1997 Garden of the Year award, sponsored by Christie's. Patrick Cooke, who has tended the 110-year-old, 30ft-high topiary hedges since the age of 14, said he was delighted.

Athelhampton will be open daily, except Saturday, from tomorrow until October. Garden £3, house and garden £4.80

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Cockney stirs rivalry

THE site of New York's most extraordinary anti-British riot has become the battleground for a new Anglo-American rivalry. During a performance of *Macbeth* at the Astor Place Opera House in 1849, the competition between the British actor William Macready and his American counterpart Edwin Forrest became so fierce that an anti-British mob went on the rampage, pelting the stage and attacking the theatre with bricks and paving stones. Before restoring order, the local militia shot dead more than 20 rioters.

New York's favourite cockney has now bought the trade union hall that replaced the old opera house in Greenwich Village to mount a fresh challenge to a famous American on his native soil: Brian McNally, a Mile End dockerman who established some

JAMES BONE'S NEW YORK



South Beach. That was until their highly publicised falling out last year, when Mr Schragger, a sneering Brooklynite, accused the affable Mr McNally of being a fake, a failure and inept.

of Manhattan's trendiest restaurants, is going toe-to-toe with Ian Schragger, founder of the legendary rightspot, Studio 54. Mr McNally plans to open the Astor Place Hotel next spring to compete directly with Schragger's Paramount, Royalton and Morgan's hotels, the favoured haunts of young European visitors to New York.

The two men used to be business partners at the Royalton, with Mr Schragger running the hotel and Mr McNally the stylish restaurant in the lobby, called 44. Mr McNally and his friend Madonna also co-owned the hip Blue Door restaurant in Mr Schragger's Delano Hotel on Miami's modish

Now Mr McNally has teamed up with Philip Pilevsky, the man who introduced Mr Schragger to the hotel business. Mr Pilevsky is the thinking man's property developer, a political science professor and television pundit, who knows as much about Islamic fundamentalism as he does about the vagaries of the property market. Messrs McNally and Pilevsky are developing a second hotel in Manhattan and another in Miami, just up the road from Mr Schragger's Delano.

All three are being designed by David Chipperfield, the British architect responsible for London's new minimalist Circus restaurant. The intense rivalry suggests that hotel lobbies have become the nightclubs of the Nineties. Mr McNally denies that he is bent on revenge against Schragger. He does wonder about the precedent set by the Astor Place riot, however: "A British actor and an American actor," he muses. "Let's hope things work out well."

Serenading for a deal

Even tourists turn into trucksters when they hit the streets of New York. I noticed a couple of elderly Mid-Westerners shopping in the boutiques of SoHo. When the woman turned her

back, I saw that she had plastered a piece of paper to her anorak with a handwritten message. It read: "Opera Tickets For Sale - at a discount." They had double-booked their outings.



Brian McNally, the cockney dockerman's son who is about to revive an old transatlantic rivalry in Greenwich Village

Court gives defendant a bad name

THE case against a reputed gangster was tossed out of court in Brooklyn when the prosecutor kept referring to him inadvertently as "Mr Gotti" - the name of a jailed Mafia Godfather.

The first time the district attorney called defendant John Ruggiero "Mr Gotti", the judge just rebuked him. But the lawyer did it again just minutes later. Pointing to the "obvious inflammatory nature of that name", the judge declared a mistrial. He then made the same mistake himself, and had to issue a correction.

Mr Ruggiero, best friend of the Godfather's son, John Gotti Jr, said he was shocked by the judge's decision - and then walked free.

If you have wondered why so many leading ladies are looking a little manly these days, it could be the fashionable exercise programme known as "Pilates". Madonna, Julia Roberts, Glenn Close, Sigourney Weaver, pictured, Jodie Foster and Uma Thurman are all practising the technique at gyms in Manhattan. Mr Pilates, a German nurse who came to America in 1926, is remembered as a cigar-puffing womaniser with a bulging tummy, who wore tight swimming trunks.



Weaver: working out

His work-out focuses on the muscles around the pelvis and bottom, and leaves women looking slim, hip and androgynous. So what is his secret? Cognoscenti claim it supplies a better orgasm.

British pop star Sting fuelled speculation about Luciano Pavarotti's ill-health with his homage to the missing tenor at the music industry's Grammy Awards. Sting, accepting one of those suspicious lifetime achievement awards on the singer's behalf, larded his remarks - inadvertently or not - with references that suggest Pavarotti's illness may be worse than publicists say. "I know you have promised to be here next year," Sting said, reminding the audience the tenor was the epitome of "living".

Auckland's blackout is likely to last for weeks

FROM CATHERINE BELL IN WELLINGTON

THIS centre of New Zealand's largest city, Auckland, was still shrouded in darkness yesterday as a six-day electricity blackout continued.

Power shortages have spread to suburbs outside the central business district and water heating has been cut to ease the load on the remaining network.

Mercury Energy, the city's power supplier, said yesterday that the business district, where 60,000 people work and another 5,000 live, could not expect to have full power until March 15.

It also emerged that plans to restore a cable had run into problems. Mercury said that a partial restoration of supply by Monday was now unlikely because of half-severed gas insulation of one of its cables. The problem has been caused by the failure of four main cables supplying the area.

Mercury has negotiated for a transmission line to be installed from the national grid to the business district along railway tracks. Environmental laws were waived yesterday to enable the work to start immediately, but it is estimated that it will take about ten weeks before it becomes operational.

City retailers estimated they were losing up to NZ\$10 million (£3.3 million) a day

because of unpredictable power cuts. Mercury Energy yesterday donated NZ\$1 million to a hardship fund for retailers, with another NZ\$1 million to come from the community trust that owns most of the power supplier.

However, the company was still taking no responsibility for the simultaneous failure of the four cables, blaming it on "a freak of nature".

Les Mills, Auckland's Mayor, has been criticised by business leaders for urging residents to avoid the city centre, but he said his first priority was to ensure no one was hurt.

"I'm fairly relaxed about people starting to filter back into the city and use its services, but to a very limited degree and on the basis that they understand that there is not a service to the city of any sort of constancy," Mr Mills said.

An inquiry ordered by the Government of Jenny Shipley, the Prime Minister, was not expected to start for another two weeks while its terms of reference and membership were decided.

Auckland's plight has caused amusement and pleasure rather than sympathy in most other parts of New Zealand. With a third of New Zealand's 3.3 million population, the city dominates the country.

Yesterday the tourism authorities in both Wellington and Dunedin placed advertisements in Auckland's daily newspaper, promoting the "energy" and "power" of their cities.

To add insult to injury, a road contractor hacked through a fibre optic cable in south Auckland this week, causing chaos for Television New Zealand viewers and thousands of phone and computer users. A Wellington-based Christian group has blamed the power crisis on God's punishment for Auckland's hosting of the annual gay and lesbian "hero parade" last weekend.

Shipley has ordered an inquiry into the fiasco

Leading article, page 23

Beijing to slim down bureaucracy

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

ALTHOUGH unemployment is soaring, Beijing is planning to shed four million Communist Party and government officials over three years in an effort to reduce its vast bureaucracy, the *China Economic Times* reported yesterday.

The number of ministries and cabinet-level commissions would be immediately cut by around one-third, leaving 29 out of the present 41. A series of super-ministries would be formed including an Information Industry Ministry grouping telecommunications, electronics and the broadcast media.

The size of China's public service, whose bureaucrats enjoy cradle-to-grave security, has become a barrier to economic reform. The Government is unable to fund the civil service payroll.

The *Economic Times* said about half of the eight million official positions in Communist Party and state bodies would be phased out.

Opposition party: Pro-democracy activists in China have set up an underground opposition party to challenge Communist rule. The China Democracy and Justice Party is the first national opposition party since the Communist takeover in 1949. (Reuters)

Retiree benches



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Libya wins first round in legal wrangle over Lockerbie trial

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR, AND THOR KERR IN THE HAGUE

BRITAIN yesterday lost the first round in its legal battle with Libya over the trial of the two men accused of the Lockerbie bombing.

The International Court of Justice at The Hague ruled that Libya was entitled to ask whether the trial could be held there instead of in either Scotland or America, as Britain has insisted.

The procedural ruling is a considerable blow to London and Washington. Both had tried to have the case thrown out before the court heard the substance of the Libyan demand on the ground that intervening United Nations Security Council resolutions had "rendered it without object".

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, yesterday put a brave face on the judgment, saying it was neither a victory nor a defeat. He said the court had decided to look at the issue in more detail at a full hearing. Meanwhile, he said, UN resolutions insisting that Libya surrender the men for trial in Scotland or America still stood.

The court will now consider Libya's proposal for a trial in The Hague, under Scottish or American procedures, of Abdel Baset Ali Muhammad al-Megrahi, and al-Amin Khalifah Fhimah, accused of blowing up Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in December 1988 with the loss of 270 lives.

Jim Swire, who lost his daughter in the explosion and has played a leading role in the campaign to bring the

accused to trial, yesterday welcomed the ruling, saying it would accelerate the setting up of an international court.

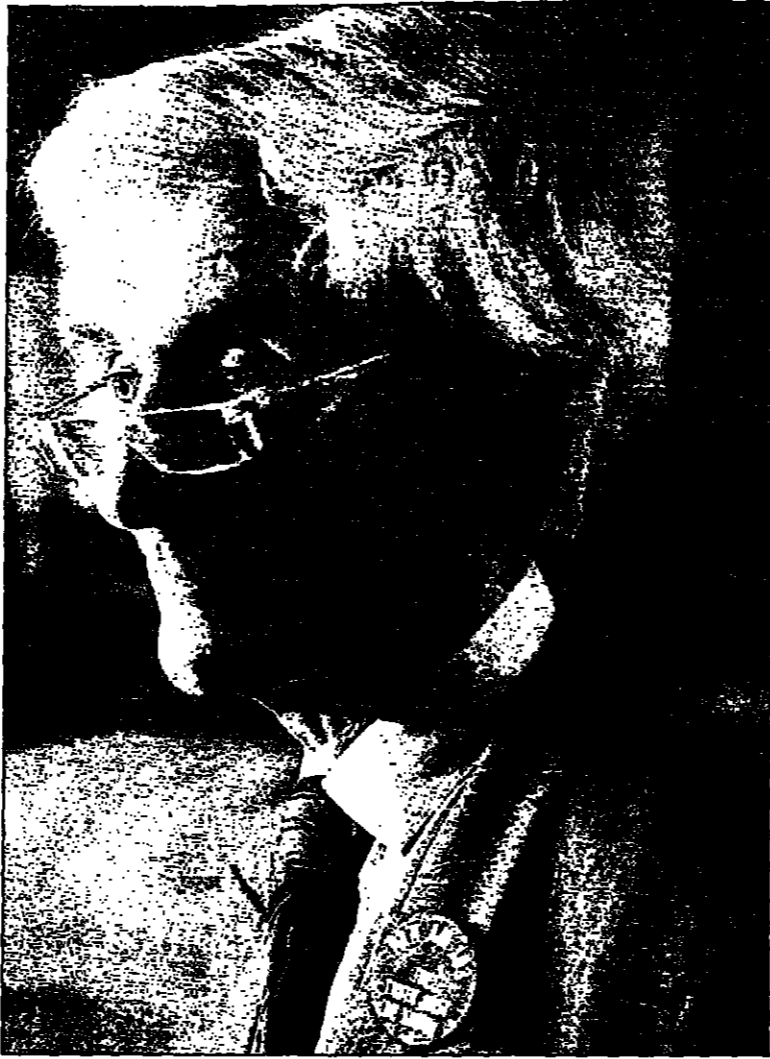
Dr Swire and many other victims' families say that a trial in a third country is the only realistic option, given Libya's refusal to extradite the men to Britain or America, where it says they will not be given a fair hearing.

He added that the families would continue to back the proposal on the table since 1994: a trial in The Hague or some other neutral country under a panel of international judges functioning under Scottish law and led by a senior judge appointed by Britain's Prime Minister.

At issue in the main hearing, which may take up to two years, is Libya's claim under the 1971 Montreal Convention on air travel that it has the right to try the accused in their own country. Britain argues that the Security Council, which agreed that they should face trial either where the plane came from or where it crashed, takes precedence over any other international convention or treaty.

Dr Swire said that, while he was no apologist for Libya, Britain's handling of the case had been "bullying, arrogant and inappropriate". He hoped the judgment would force Britain to agree to a trial in a third country.

Hamed Elhouchari, the Libyan Ambassador to The Netherlands, wel-



Jim Swire welcomed the court decision, saying Britain's handling of the case had been "bullying, arrogant and inappropriate"

comed the ruling, and hoped it would allow a trial to go ahead or another diplomatic solution to be found so that trade sanctions could be lifted immediately. "There is an injustice committed against Libya," he said. "The Security Council is not the place to find a solution to this problem."

President Mandela of South Africa visited Colonel Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, on his way to the Commonwealth summit in October, and urged

Britain to accept the offer of trial in a third country. Britain politely rebuffed his proposal.

Mr Cook met Dr Swire and other family representatives, and said that Washington would never agree to the idea of getting a trial held under Scottish procedures. But he added that Britain did not rule out in advance any new proposals. British diplomats said they were ready for a vigorous fight.

Americans plan to 'snap back' if Saddam reneges

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE United States is developing what it is now calling a "snap-back" policy, under which any serious breaches of the agreement on arms inspections signed by Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, will be met with a rapid military response.

Although there is concern in Britain that it will be difficult to launch an attack unless the weapons inspection regime totally collapses, the Americans are determined to maintain a robust threat of military retaliation. Britain has agreed to keep its forces in the Gulf for as long as necessary, but there are indications that if President Saddam Hussein shows he is prepared to stick to the agreement signed in Baghdad, some of the British military assets sent to the region, principally the aircraft carrier and eight extra Tornado GR1s, might be withdrawn. However, Britain would retain the ability to reinforce rapidly.

The British Government, backed by the military, believes it is right to offer Iraq a carrot as well as a stick. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said last week that sanctions could be lifted in "the fairly near future" if the United Nations inspection work was completed satisfactorily. However, America has begun to impose on Britain the need to have a snap-back approach. Tony Blair has already given his full support to President Clinton's promise to keep the military option alive, but there are fears that bombing would probably destroy any chance of maintaining UN inspectors in Iraq.

There is already evidence that Saddam has dispersed some key missile equipment to other friendly countries. The latest intelligence is that he has transferred vital items of ballistic missile equipment to Syria to escape the threatened large-scale American bombing of strategic military sites.

British military sources said yesterday that the main concern over Saddam's biological and chemical weapons programme was not the nerve agent and anthrax stocks but rather the delivery systems that he could use to launch attacks. One of the key objectives of the renewed UN inspections will be to track down the surviving Scud missiles and destroy them.

America is expected to keep two carrier battle groups in the Gulf for an extended period.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Reluctant Israelis apologise to Swiss

Jerusalem: Under intense diplomatic pressure, Israel yesterday made public an apology to the Swiss Government for last week's bungled Mossad bugging operation in Bern. Only hours after insisting one would not be given (Christopher Walker writes).

The Government was initially reluctant to make a public apology because it confirmed that the one member of the five-strong spy squad still in Swiss detention was indeed a Mossad agent. Efforts to secure his swift release are consequently likely to be made more difficult. But diplomatic sources said the Swiss authorities - furious over Israeli leaks about the affair resulting from in-fighting within the discredited security service - had sought the apology as a condition of President Cotti of Switzerland going ahead with his visit to Israel in May.

Prisoners 'shot as quarry'

Los Angeles: Eight guards from a Californian prison have been charged with inciting fights between gang members in order to shoot them from observation galleries as a form of human blood sport (Giles Whitell writes). The guards face a federal trial after a four-year FBI investigation into systematic and often fatal violence at Corcoran state prison, north of Los Angeles. At least seven inmates were shot dead in what the guards called "duck hunting season", according to the allegations. One prisoner's death was caught on video. A reign of terror by rogue officers included ritual intimidation of new inmates, who were beaten on arrival.

Cambodia ceasefire starts

Phnom Penh: Both sides in Cambodia's internal conflict were told by their respective leaders to lay down their arms last night (Caroline Gluck writes). Prince Norodom Ranariddh, the ousted First Prime Minister, issued a statement from Bangkok ordering his troops to observe a unilateral ceasefire from midnight and hours later the Cambodian Government ordered its own immediate ceasefire. Fighting has raged since July.

Spock plea over care bills

Boston: Mary Morgan, the wife of Dr Benjamin Spock, right, America's best-known baby doctor, is asking for money from friends and family to help to pay his homecare medical bills of \$10,000 (£6,000) a month, the Boston Globe said. Dr Spock will turn 95 on May 2, when the seventh edition of *Baby and Child Care*, first published in 1945 and which has earned him \$25 million, comes out. He has suffered a heart attack and a stroke. (AP)



Romanian child Aids toll

Bucharest: Almost 90 per cent of all Romania's Aids victims are children, giving the country the highest child Aids rate in Europe, officials said. Most of the 3,000 children with Aids were infected between 1988 and 1991 by blood transfusions or needles under the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu and shortly after its overthrow. Dr Maria Georgescu of the non-governmental Aras organisation said. Since the overthrow of communism, 2,000 children had died, she said. (AP)

US ends Pretoria arms ban

Pretoria: America lifted a 35-year-old arms embargo against South Africa. It was imposed in protest against apartheid, but was extended in response to a 1994 dispute over extradition. Resolution of the row was announced by Vice-President Al Gore and Thabo Mbeki, the South African Deputy President. Under the settlement, South Africa has to set up mechanisms to ensure that American-made arms were not passed to third parties. (Reuters)

'Vampire' sentenced to die

Tavares, Florida: Circuit Judge Jerry Lockett sentenced Rod Ferrell, 17, the leader of a vampire cult, to the electric chair for the crowbar killings of a Florida couple - then urged the prosecution of the victims' daughter, whom a grand jury had failed to indict. Richard Wendorf and Naoma Ruth Queen were killed in November 1996 after Ferrell and three members of his blood-sucking cult travelled from Kentucky to help their daughter, Heather, to run away. (AP)

Letters, page 23

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سكزا من الاصل

Artist's family wins £2.5m fight with gallery

Works can now be shown together, report Stephen Farrell and Martin Tystad



Ernst Schwitters and his British mistress Kathie Ashley; and below, the artist's son at the last meeting with his Norwegian wife Lola in a hospital in Leicester

A LEADING international art dealership has lost a £2.5 million legal battle with descendants of Kurt Schwitters, the German Dadaist sculptor who spent his last years in self-imposed exile in the Lake District.

Marlborough International Fine Art, which has sister galleries in Mayfair and New York, must now pay the family's £185,000 costs after a series of disputes pursued through courts in Britain, Norway and Liechtenstein.

The case centred on who had control of the multi-million-pound collection belonging to heirs of the abstract sculptor and poet, regarded as an eccentric but harmless figure by villagers in Ambleside where he died in 1948 after fleeing Nazi Germany.

Schwitters began experimenting with abstract pictures in 1918 after studying in Dresden. He first visited Norway in 1929 and fled there in 1937 with his family when the Nazis declared his work to be decadent. Although his descendants later settled there, he remained only three years in Norway, moving to Britain in 1940.

During the eight years he spent in the Lake District before his death he was forced to sell landscapes for money to buy food and fuel, and used in his work any objects he found lying around.

In 1963 Schwitters's wealthy son Ernst, a Norwegian citizen, appointed Marlborough sole agents for his collection of more than 600 works, including pieces by his father and other modern artists such as Picasso, Miró and Kandinsky.

But in 1993 Ernst suffered a stroke while living in Leicester with his British mistress Kathie Ashley, 30 years his junior. His Norwegian wife Lola successfully fought in the British courts to have him — by now paralysed — returned to Oslo in a bitter legal battle.

A British judge rejected claims that the mistress was a "gold-digging hussy" but ruled that Ernst, then 76, should spend the rest of his life in an Oslo nursing home with a guardian appointed to look after his interests. He



Kurt Schwitters, whose work is now internationally renowned, and his grandson Bengt, below, who has won his case to set up a foundation of the artist's work



contract four years ago was justified. He gave the gallery two weeks to pay the £185,000 costs.

Marlborough has refused to comment. However, the Schwitters family saw the case as an obstacle to their ambition of setting up a cultural centre to display Schwitters's work.

The artist's grandson Bengt, 50, a former physics lecturer at Oslo University, last night welcomed the ruling. He said: "I am not surprised, I would have been shocked if we did not win this case. I didn't ask to be born a Schwitters, but I am and I have to fight for my grandfather's interests and my father's dream of setting up a foundation in his honour.

"I believe we must set up this foundation so people can appreciate his work as a whole, not scattered in small collections around the world."

This is not the first such case involving companies in the Marlborough group. In 1971 the American Abstract Expressionist painter Mark Rothko's daughter Kate accused the gallery of conspiracy and conflict of interest by charging commission of up to 50 per cent when selling some of her father's works. A Manhattan court awarded about £6 million damages against Frank Lloyd, the New York Marlborough and the artist's executors.

Schwitters, from Hanover, transformed rubbish into art by using discarded objects such as worn-out shoe soles. He was largely ignored by the British art establishment in his own time but is now regarded as an important figure whose works have been displayed in the Tate Gallery and New York's Museum of Metropolitan Art.

One of his most valuable works, *The Merzbau*, a huge abstract collage of recovered objects including part of a Lake District barn, is estimated to be worth £15 million. It can be seen at the Hatton Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne. An earlier *Merzbau* involved converting two storeys of his Hanover home to accommodate the vast three-dimensional collage; it was destroyed by Allied bombing in 1943.

Frescoes reduced to rubble are now beyond salvation

Earthquakes may have destroyed forever the medieval masterpieces which shaped future of Western painting, writes Richard Owen

SIX months after the earthquake that devastated Umbria, art experts are reluctantly coming to the conclusion that great medieval works of art which form part of the origins of Western painting are beyond repair. They include Cimabue's *St Matthew*, and a figure of St Francis attributed to Giotto.

Federico Zeri, Italy's foremost art historian and an authority on the Assisi frescoes, said that there was "absolutely no hope" of piecing the paintings back together. The skill and commitment of the restoration team is not in question, but Professor Zeri believes that attempts to reconstruct lost works of art are becoming "ridiculous". He said: "Most of the frescoes are not just in fragments, they have crumbled completely. If you look inside the boxes, you just see dust. You cannot reconstitute a painting from dust."

The two tremors that shook the area on the morning of September 26 last year brought down part of the vaulted ceiling in the Upper Church of the Basilica of St Francis, which is 700 years old and is one of the most important churches in Christendom. Four people — two Franciscan friars and two surveyors — died when they were buried beneath the rubble. Its painted marvels — part of which may have been lost forever — included the *Four Evangelists* by Cimabue; above the high altar, and the *Doctors of the Church*, above the main door, attributed to Giotto, whose celebrated cycle of frescoes on the life of St Francis decorates the walls of the Upper Church.

According to Antonio Paolucci, the former Culture Minister in charge of the restoration, structural engineers now believe the ceiling gave way under the pressure of 1,000 tons of rubble that had been dumped in the wall cavities of the basilica some time in the last century. The fabric of the basilica has been shored up, and the massive roof-folding-covered building echoes to the sound of masons' hammers and carpenters' saws, when as it must have done when built in the 13th

century. The Lower Church, which contains the tomb of St Francis, has reopened.

There are still relatively few tourists in Assisi. But according to Signor Paolucci, 12 million Catholic and Anglican pilgrims — three times the normal annual number of visitors — are expected to visit during the millennium, when the Upper Church is also to be re-opened. What officials have to face, however, is that the jagged holes left by the ceiling's collapse cannot be restored to the way they were. The engineers in charge of the reconstruction have also been criticised for negligence: one technician recently left a hose running, causing further damage to two Giotto frescoes in the right transept of the Upper



Some of the sifted fragments of the frescoes damaged in September. But 2,000 boxes have yet to be opened

millennium, and some we may never reassemble at all except with large blank spaces," Signora Passalacqua said. "Part of the problem is that the rescue workers used bulldozers because they feared more people were buried underneath. They were in a rush, they heaped all the fragments up in one place, and then moved it all a second time, so it all got mixed up. By the time we got to it, hardly anything was where it had fallen."

Perhaps the greatest loss is Cimabue's *St Matthew*, the pulverised remains of which are stored in orange crates. Together with Giotto and the Roman painter Pietro Cavallini, Cimabue is credited with laying the foundations of Western art by painting lifelike human figures instead of the flat, stylised images of Byzantine art. The colours of his frescoes in the apse and transept of the Upper Church, painted between 1278 and 1285, have faded and blackened with time, but his *Crucifixion*, *Transfiguration of Christ* and *Acts of the Apostles* were still an awesome sight for visitors before the earthquake struck.

But although private donors and companies have been "generous", much of the promised state finance has not materialised, Signora Passalacqua says. "In a way it was better immediately after the disaster, when money poured in. Now the interest has waned."

Professor Zeri is convinced that there will be "more gaps than fragments". Giuseppe Basile, of the Umbrian Arts Superintendents Office, which is overseeing the work, admits that "if we end up with only 20 per cent of a human figure and some sky, there is not much we can do about it."

Signora Passalacqua says she can "reconstruct a piece of cloak, say, by painstaking technical restoration. But we cannot re-create an eye. You cannot substitute for the painter of genius who created the work." The only answer, in Professor Zeri's view, is to "put the few fragments we have under display cases in a museum at the basilica, and say to visitors: 'this is all that is left of what used to be.'"

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SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28 1998

WORLD IN BRIEF

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FBI links Olympic bombing to attack on abortion clinic

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE FBI yesterday stepped up efforts to track down the chief suspect in the bombing last month of an Alabama abortion clinic after investigators uncovered evidence that linked the attack to the fatal blast at the 1996 Olympics and another explosion at a clinic in Atlanta.

Eric Rudolph, 31, a fugitive charged in connection with the death of an off-duty police officer in Birmingham, Alabama, was said to be in hiding in rural North Carolina as investigators found forensic evidence implicating him in the two earlier attacks.

Federal authorities have found that small steel plates, apparently designed to control the direction of the Olympic bomb in Atlanta, match those in two explosives planted at an abortion clinic in the city's suburbs last year. They have determined that the plates were cut from steel found in a search of the Franklin Mach-

ine Company, a metal-working plant in North Carolina that employed a friend of Mr Rudolph. No similar fragments were found at the scene of the Birmingham attack.

The explosion at Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta killed one person and injured 100 others while two bombs planted the following year at an abortion clinic in the city injured seven.

In a further breakthrough, agents found another link to the fugitive ten days ago in laboratory analysis that showed the nails used in the Birmingham blast matched those in the Atlanta clinic bombing and others found in a shed rented by Mr Rudolph.

Evidence that all three incidents may be the work of one individual or group resulted in a special meeting of top FBI officials this week. Louis Freeh, the FBI director, assigned further agents to the case and placed the inquiry

under the command of Terry Turchie, the man who led the Unabomber investigation.

Mr Rudolph was first linked to the Birmingham bombing after witnesses saw his truck near the scene and so far he has only been charged with that incident. Law enforcement agencies, who have spent weeks scouring the countryside for Mr Rudolph, said the new evidence had made them intensify their hunt. This has so far focused on an area of rugged wilderness in western North Carolina where the part-time carpenter has spent much of his time. It is believed he may be hiding in a cabin.

The FBI and other agencies had earlier speculated that the same person might be involved in all three bombings and in a further attack on a gay nightclub last year, but they have yet to find a motive that would link all the explosions.



Tommy Lee, the rock drummer, is charged yesterday in Malibu with assaulting his wife, Pamela Anderson, the ex-Baywatch actress, who is seeking a divorce

EU leaders hail policy success as 11 states pass the euro test

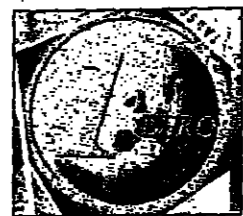
FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

Leaders of the European Union basked in mutual congratulation yesterday after France, Germany and Italy turned in rosy economic figures that are all but certain to qualify them for monetary union next January, along with eight other member states.

Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, President Chirac of France and Romano Prodi, the Italian Prime Minister, all hailed their country's achievements in meeting the key budget test set in 1992 in Maastricht, for the right to dissolve their currencies into the euro. Their better-than-expected figures for the test year of 1997 were mirrored in

Germany and Italy. France had applied "creative accounting" measures, to help to hit the budget target.

In Brussels EU officials were taking satisfaction from the vindication of their forecasts of recent years, which had been widely criticised as over-optimistic, notably in Britain. Although the Germans and Dutch are still uneasy over Italy's startling conversion to financial rectitude over the past three years, the week's data virtually guarantee that EU leaders will endorse the launch of a "broad" euro that includes all EU states except Greece, Britain, Sweden and Denmark. The last three also pass the



Maastricht tests but have opted to stay out of the single currency. While 11 states all meet the criteria on budget deficits, inflation and interest rates, the leaders' meeting under British chairmanship on May 2, will have to apply the flexible wording of the Maastricht treaty on national debt. Belgium and Italy registered debt at double the 60 per cent ceiling set in the treaty, which says higher figures are acceptable provided the level has come down at a "satisfactory speed". Germany offers the only exception to the falling condition, with debt that rose over the ceiling last year to 61.3 per cent. Imposing the strict ceiling, only Britain, Finland, France and Luxembourg pass the Maastricht tests.

While euro membership is now decided, wrangling is continuing over the make-up of the future European Central Bank, which takes over euro management on July 1.

and coins are issued in 2002. In the less rigid criterion of national debt, however, only France, Finland and Luxembourg managed to reach the target.

Herr Kohl, the driving force behind the EU's grand project and now fighting for re-election, hailed the data as "impressive confirmation" of his Government's policies. The euro would "come punctually as planned on January 1, 1999. It will be a stable currency just as we have grown accustomed to with the mark for almost 50 years."

M Chirac, whose Government claimed a budget deficit at the Maastricht ceiling of 3 per cent of gross domestic product, said he was "delighted that our country is now able to respect all the criteria decided in Maastricht". Like

EUROPEAN TARGETS			
Vital statistics for EU countries wishing to qualify for economic and monetary union next week			
	DEFICIT (Surplus)	DEBT/GDP	Inflation
TARGET	1997	1997	1997
Austria	3%	60%	2.7%
Belgium	2.5	122.2	1.5
Denmark*	(0.7)	64.1	2.0
Finland	0.9	55.8	1.2
France	3.0	58.0	1.3
Germany	2.7	51.5	1.5
Greece*	4.0	108.7	5.4
Ireland	(0.9)	87e	1.2e
Italy	2.7	121.6	1.9
Luxembourg	(1.7)	6.7	1.4
Netherlands	1.4	73e	1.9p
Portugal	2.5	62.0	1.9
Spain	2.6	53.3	1.9
Sweden*	0.4	76.6	1.9
UK*	1.9	53.4	1.9

Key: p provisional e estimated
* no plans to participate in first wave of EMU

Bulgaria in Crisis

Emergency Appeal to Times Readers

LEFT TO FREEZE
Children like Yordan, 1½, already malnourished could die from cold and hunger this winter unless they are fed. With temperatures plummeting to -15° Yordan's scant clothing and no shoes offer him little protection from the bitter cold and there is no money to heat his orphanage. There are 37,000 places in Bulgaria's orphanages.

Cold weather alert

No Money To Feed The Children No Money To Heat The Orphanages

Bulgaria is a country in the midst of a serious economic crisis. Now thousands of children are suffering terribly as winter reaches its coldest point. Urgent help is needed.

There is little money to heat the orphanages. Orphanage Directors are having to beg for food from local villages and rarely know where the next meal is coming from. In some areas children, like Yordan, are going hungry and the cold could prove fatal for many children this winter. Without aid this could be catastrophic for Bulgaria's orphanage children.

The European Children's Trust, sister charity of The Romanian Orphanage Trust, is ready to distribute emergency food packs, clothes and fuel to the orphanages in most need.

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€28 could buy enough emergency food packs to feed 20 orphanage children for a week or heat an orphanage for 3 days.

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Signature _____ Date _____

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Please act NOW - winter is here

MAGAZINE

Blunders revealed: what every woman needs to know about the smear test

STYLE

Sleek Galliano: an exclusive preview of Dior's glamorous new look

SPORT

Grand prix special: Damon Hill writes exclusively for The Sunday Times; David Coulthard interview; colour guide to the 1998 teams. Plus: win a Ferrari in our Fantasy Formula One game

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سكزا من الاصل

Stars sew up fashion trade

Clothing companies are boosting their cool and their turnovers by dressing pop stars for success, reports Kathryn Knight



The boy band Damage model clothes in a Sonneti catalogue

Pop stars have found a lucrative perk as fashion companies vie to persuade them to wear their labels.

Chart acts from All Saints and Oasis to The Verve and Paul Weller are getting their clothes for free, in return for the valuable endorsement they give every time they appear in a photo shoot.

Behind the scenes, businessmen are targeting up-and-coming performers for sponsorship deals in the hope that they will remain faithful when fame arrives. "There is a whole line of business dedicated to getting the right clothes on the right celebrities," William Drew, editor of *fw*, a fashion trade magazine, said. "But it is all a matter of timing. Everyone will be sending Oasis and The Verve their products. But the key is to get them when they are up and rising, so you can build a relationship with them to which they will remain loyal." At Levi's, product managers have a policy of teaming up with promising newcomers to help them to maintain a reputation for cutting-edge cool. Last year they worked with drum 'n' bass artist Roni Size, this year it's Pulp's Jarvis Cocker, who wears their white tab jeans. Gary Burnand, consumer marketing manager for Levi's, said: "It's a case of keeping your eyes open for new faces. Are they wearing denim? Are they doing

interesting things? Then you can develop a relationship from there." Levi's began to work with Jay Kay, frontman with Jamiroquai, when he was a minor figure on the acid jazz scene. "He more or less lives in our boot-cut cords," Mr Burnand said. "We give him the free products and he often thanks us at the end of concerts."

Publicity officers at Kangol spotted the potential of the Gallagher brothers when they appeared in a magazine early in their career wearing the company's hats. Lucy Jenner, of Kangol, said: "We invited them to look at our lines and they started to wear more of our stuff. Now they come in regularly to check out what we've got and in return we get their endorsement. We get a lot of calls whenever Liam or Noel are seen in Kangol."



Liam Gallagher with Kangol hat

Product placement has a long history in Hollywood but the fashion industry is increasingly realising how pop stars can set trends. Last week, Clarke revealed that sales of their Wallabee Moccasin shoes had soared since Richard Ashcroft, frontman of the Verve, sported a pair on the cover of their hit album *Urban Hymns*. The company now supplies Mr Ashcroft with the £75 shoes for photo shoots when requested. A spokesman said: "It is a huge boost, but the great thing is that it's



Boots worn by Melanie Blatt of All Saints reveal the manufacturer to their thousands of fans

genuine endorsement — we don't pay them. We've supplied a few free pairs for photo shoots and videos, but I believe that Mr Ashcroft bought the pair he wears on the front of the album in one of our shops."

Caterpillar's Colorado boots are also walking out of shops after All Saints sported them in recent pictures. Originally it was the band that got in contact with Caterpillar, and the company realised they were onto a good thing.

Kate Brooks, of Caterpillar, said: "We gave them the stuff for free. Now we've had lots of retailers calling in saying they've sold out and can they get some more. We hope it will continue to be mutually beneficial.

Once you start badgering them you risk losing their affection."

The youth clothing line Sonneti are sponsoring the boy band Damage. "It lends credibility to both of us," Daniel Morris, of Sonneti, said. "The boys have a big name behind us and we get their fans contacting us to find out what they're wearing after their gigs."

Reinforcing pop's fashion status, London Fashion Week has seen designers clamouring for stars to attend their events. This year saw Keith Flint, singer with the Prodigy, and Shazmeen Spiteri, singer with Texas, at Alexander McQueen and Natalie Imbruglia at Philip Treacy. Clare Murphy, news editor of

Marketing magazine, said clothes endorsement in pop was a recent trend. "It is a recognised way of getting publicity for your product rather than ramming it down people's throats. With the advent of 'Brit cool', it is much more cost-effective."

However, as one fashion industry pundit pointed out, it can also have drawbacks. "If you do it badly, the results can be damaging," he said.

"I am not sure Adidas will be best pleased with the endorsement of Sparty Spice, not because people don't like her, but because it means their three-stripe trainers will be bought by 10 and 12-year-olds, alienating the more lucrative older end of the market," he said.

The king and queen of rock fear losing their crowns

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN LOS ANGELES

In the lush hills of the Bel Air district of Los Angeles, a damage control operation is under way to salvage the good name of the most flamboyant woman in the music business. Should it fail, her British husband's career could be at stake along with the future of the EMI recording empire.

Ken and Nancy Berry have become leading players in a drama of ego and extravagance, and they do not disappoint. She is known for holding candle-lit meetings in short skirts and bare feet at their Spanish-style villa in Los Angeles. He signed the Rolling Stones for \$42 million (£26 million). Yet as president of EMI Recorded Music he is under attack for falling profits, falling share prices and for promoting his wife so brazenly that she has been called "the Hillary Clinton of the record industry". Mrs Berry, 39, has raised eyebrows with her lavish parties and close relationships with the stars that she represents as vice-chairman of Virgin Records in America.

Her power at EMI's top level, plotting global marketing campaigns for such pop phenomena as Janet Jackson and the Spice Girls, is said to be a factor behind mounting turmoil at the group's London headquarters. There, Sir Colin Southgate abruptly dropped plans last week to step aside as chairman, but the move did little to reassure investors who have seen the company's share price fall by 21 per cent since it split from Thorn-EMI two years ago.

The "anointed king and queen of rock'n'roll", as one writer called them, the Berries have vehemently denied allegations of nepotism. Mr Berry has dismissed as ludicrous claims that his wife had affairs with some of her top performers. But her management style has nonetheless come to the attention of her most senior bosses.

An EMI executive has told *The Wall Street Journal* that after a swirl of tabloid rumours, Sir Colin last year asked Richard Branson to talk to Mr Berry about his wife, for fear that gossip about her would prove "damaging to the reputation of his company". Mr Branson has confirmed he raised the issue.

Mrs Berry admits zealously following big-name bands around the world and socialising backstage with the performers, but insists it is the only way to do her job — even to the point of attending 30 concerts on the Rolling Stones' last tour.

Critics who spread gossip about her clothes and private life are jealous, if not sexist, Mrs Berry maintains. "I don't have sexual relationships with artists," she said this week. "I have friendships with artists."

Mr Berry took over management of Virgin Records when Thorn-EMI bought it in a \$960 million (£600 million) deal in 1991. But his position as future chairman of the \$4 billion EMI Group is in doubt, partly as a result of his personnel decisions. Mrs Berry's promotion to one of the most desirable jobs in rock and roll came days after her husband reportedly squeezed out her predecessor, Mr Berry made the move without Sir Colin's knowledge and it "drove a wedge between the two", *The New York Times* said.

As Sir Colin, 59, stays on to rethink the succession at one of Britain's oldest record companies, its profit forecast for the year has dropped by \$40 million amid rumours that it could be bought by an American conglomerate.

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Business, page 27

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Russian mafia 'framed boy of 16 for mass murder'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

AT FOUR in the morning on February 27, 1995 French police manning an emergency switchboard in Louveciennes, a smart Paris suburb, answered a call from an hysterical 16-year-old boy who said his name was Alekski.

"Come quickly," he screamed. "They have killed my whole family."

Minutes later police discovered a scene of appalling carnage. Alekski's father, Yevgeni Polevoi, 42, a nouveau riche Moscow businessman, had been shot dead in the family's luxury villa; nearby lay the bodies of the boy's stepmother, his grandparents and two Russian family friends. All six had been murdered with clinical precision.

Under interrogation, Alekski first claimed that masked killers had broken into the house at night, then contradicted himself and then, to the astonishment of investigators, said he had committed all six murders.

But what initially appeared to be a simple, if dreadful, family murder case has evolved into a complex saga. Alekski's "confession" is inconsistent and in part unbelievable, has since been withdrawn.

An investigation into his father's elaborate business dealings, involving former KGB officers and senior Russian government officials, has raised suspicions that far more is at stake than merely a family dispute that turned murderous.

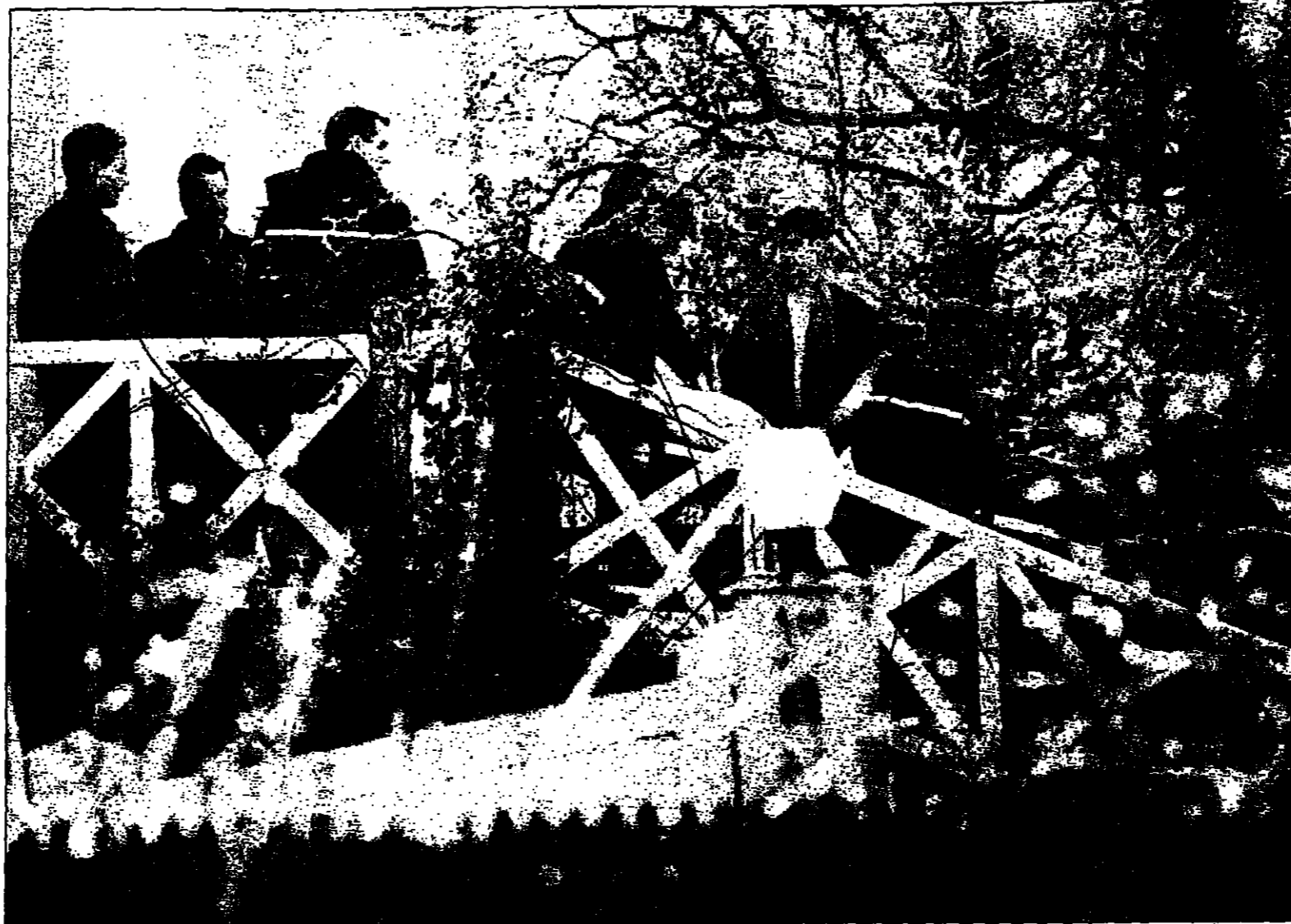
Eighteen months after the drama, Alekski's uncle was also assassinated, and the Russian community in Paris is in no doubt that the massacre at Louveciennes was not the work of a lone teenager, but a vendetta killing by the Russian mafia.

Next Wednesday a French juvenile court will begin hearings, behind closed doors, to decide whether Alekski, now 19, is a brutal psychopath with a talent for mendacity, or the juvenile victim of Russian organised crime.

In the immediate aftermath of the murders, the case against Alekski appeared unassailable: the boy had gunpowder on his hands and his fingerprints were on all three murder weapons. On the night of the murders, investigators pointed out, French television had broadcast a film about two parricidal brothers.

Yevgeni Polevoi had made a fortune selling wood in the early Nineties, as business opportunities, more or less legal, flourished with the fall of Communism. In addition to the villa in Louveciennes, he had a flat in Paris, another in Moscow and a dacha, not to mention a Mercedes and an apparently endless supply of cash. He and his second wife, Ludmila, lived a sumptuous life. Yevgeni drank heavily, and his relationship with his indulged teenage son was stormy and occasionally violent.

On the night of the murders Yevgeni, on his return from a drunken dinner, beat and



French firemen remove the bodies of six Russians who were shot dead in the fashionable Paris suburb of Louveciennes in February 1995



The smart residence where Alekski Polevoi, right, allegedly carried out the murders



humiliated his son in front of the family and their guests. "I couldn't take any more," Alekski told investigators in his first statement, describing how he had shot his father in a "mad rage" and then the five other adults, one after the other.

Only his half-sister, two-year-old Natasha, was left unharmed, sleeping in an upstairs room.

But from the start, Alekski's account appeared flawed. A gun enthusiast, Yevgeni had no less than 20 firearms in the

house. One of the victims, Slava Viatchlav, was a former army officer turned professional bodyguard, and surely more than a match for a boy of 16. Yet there was no sign whatever of a struggle. The murders were gruesomely efficient, even professional. Fifteen shots were fired in all, and only one bullet went awry.

Psychologists described Alekski, a plump, round-faced youth with no history of violence, as "perfectly normal". Schoolfriends recalled an affable, balanced child, whom they nicknamed "the Russian bear".

Nine months after the murders, Alekski went to investigating magistrate Catherine Rechter with a very different, if scarcely more believable

story. He had been forced to load the murder weapons by a masked man, he said, who had threatened to kill him, his baby sister, his girlfriend and his mother, a librarian living in Russia, if he did not confess to the crime. The killer, he claimed, had forced him to fire a shot into his father's dead body, before searching the house and leaving with a package, apparently containing several million dollars.

Yevgeni had many enemies. For all his bluster and wealth, his business empire was in disarray, he was drinking ever more heavily and believed he was in imminent danger of being murdered. The day before his death, the businessman called a friend in Paris and told him: "They are going to assassinate me."

In January he had been shot at on a Moscow street. Soon after he had narrowly escaped being killed while out hunting. "It's all over, I'm finished," he told his accountant.

Yevgeni, from a poor Belorussian family, was a typical poor boy who made good through perestroika. With his second wife and Vassilli Skidan, a former officer in the KGB, he set up a hugely lucrative wood marketing company, before diversifying into petrol and the import-export business.

The family moved to France in 1990, but according to Catherine Erhel, author of a book on the case, Yevgeni maintained powerful contacts within the Russian Establishment; just days before his death he entertained a senior adviser to Viktor Chernomyr-

din, the Russian Prime Minister. A year after the killings, French investigators travelled to Moscow in an attempt to unravel Yevgeni's byzantine business dealings.

Just five months after the massacre at Louveciennes, one of his key associates, Gennadi Chaitanov, was found dead in his office. The official cause of death was a heart attack.

Still more mysterious was the death of Yevgeni's younger brother, Dmitri, who had taken over some of his dead brother's business affairs. Dmitri had informed French investigators he had information that could prove the innocence of his nephew. On December 8, 1996, Dmitri was shot dead on a quiet country road near his home in Belorussia.

After that unsolved killing, a senior Russian prosecutor promised to provide "unequivocal" evidence of a link between the death of Dmitri Polevoi and the murders in France. The evidence was never produced.

French law sets a strict limit on how long a minor can be held in detention and despite the wealth of unanswered questions, French prosecutors elected to press ahead with the trial of Alekski, believing they have a watertight case.

The jailed 19-year-old has been quoted as saying: "If I am convicted, that's just too bad."

Next week a French court will have the chance to decide whether that is the remark of an unrepentant killer or a child entangled in a horrific conspiracy.

Romanov bones to be buried in family vault

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

THE Russian Government ruled yesterday that the bones of Nicholas II, the last Tsar, and his family, will be buried in the Romanov family vault in the Peter and Paul fortress in St Petersburg on July 17, the 80th anniversary of their deaths.

The announcement by Boris Nemtsov, the First Deputy Prime Minister - which still requires formal confirmation from President Yeltsin - follows the recommendation of a special commission. Last month the commission confirmed the authenticity of the bones, excavated in 1991 near the Ural city of Yekaterinburg, where the Tsar, his wife Alexandra and their five children were killed by the Bolsheviks in 1918.

Mr Yeltsin said earlier this week that he would accept the Government's decision, which is also in accordance with members of the Romanov family. But one stumbling block remains. It is inconceivable that the burial service, which promises to be a grand occasion attended by royalty from all over Europe, can take place without the Russian Orthodox Church.

A statement issued on Thursday by the Church's Holy Synod said it had doubts over the authenticity of the bones - despite documentary evidence and DNA testing. The Synod called for the burial of the bones in a temporary site until firm proof of their identity was established.

"The issue of where to bury the Yekaterinburg remains can be reviewed when all doubt about them has been removed along with all basis for confusion and conflict," the statement said.

The bones were exhumed from an unmarked grave in woodland outside Yekaterinburg. The bodies had been burnt and doused with acid to hamper identification before they were buried.

Specialists concluded that they were the bones of Nicholas and Alexandra and their daughters Olga, Tatyana and Anastasia as well as four members of their staff. The bodies of the Tsar's son and heir, Alexei, and a fourth daughter, Maria, have not been found. Some believe they were buried separately, while others say they were burnt and the bones crushed to dust and scattered.

A series of tests has been conducted over the past seven years using DNA material from the bones of the Tsar's brother, Grand Duke Georgi. The Duke of Edinburgh, a blood relative, also helped.

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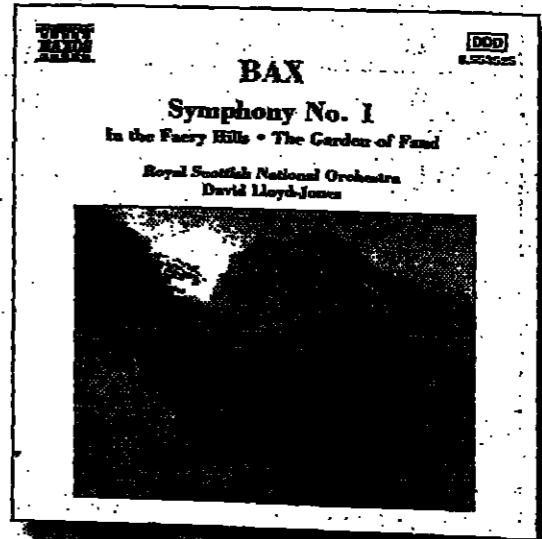
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مكتبة الامم المتحدة

James Bone talks to the wife of the UN leader who negotiated a peace deal with Saddam

First Lady of the World

As her husband met President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, Nane Annan was revisiting St Patrick's Cathedral in New York to pray for the success of his mission...

For the "First Lady of the World" it was a nerve-racking weekend. She did manage to slip out to visit an art fair on nearby Park Avenue...

A Swede with Ingrid Bergman beauty and the same easy grace as her husband, Mrs Annan, 53, is a reluctant celebrity. The day Mr Annan was elected to run the UN at the end of 1996...

When we arrived back in New York, she rushed to meet him at the airport and drove in with him to UN headquarters. Television viewers around the globe saw her at his side as he was given a hero's welcome...



Kofi Annan and his wife, Nane, whose modesty decrees that she display only one of her paintings in the public part of their Manhattan mansion — to "cover a hole"

red bus I used to take. I have to pinch myself about the life I am living." So modest that she seldom meets the press, preferring instead to answer questions in writing...

She comes from a distinguished lineage that suits her well to the diplomatic life. Her father, Gunnar Lagergren, was a prominent international jurist who helped to settle boundary disputes between India and Pakistan...

Her mother, Nina Lagergren (née von Dardel) was the half-sister of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazis...

forces. Wallenberg's last known letter home arrived shortly after Nane was born in 1944 and requested: "Kiss the little one for me..."

Last year Mrs Annan herself attended the unveiling of a statue of Wallenberg at the West Marble Arch synagogue in the West End of London...

Mrs Annan followed her father into the law. She became an assistant judge in Sweden, worked as a legal expert for various Swedish government commissions...



Wallenberg: mystery

riage: Ama, Zi, and Koko. 24.) After remarrying to Mr Annan, however, she started painting full-time, first at New York's renowned Art Students League...

While her husband was the head of UN peacekeeping, she painted large canvases of fallen bodies and motorcycles — which she later understood as symbols not just of power but of violence...

Hang over her head as we talk is an untitled oil of a brown body slumped in the corner of a room, with heavy, moody brushwork. It is the only piece by her on display in the public quarters...

ary-General, and his promotion took the couple by surprise. On the day she learnt he would be chosen as UN chief, Mrs Annan found herself at a restaurant on the other side of Manhattan from UN headquarters...

"What happened was I followed him on his trips because I wanted to be with him because he is the person I love. It's what I ought to do. For me, the aeroplane is luxury time because I can sit next to him for eight hours."

A lyrical slice of Irish suffering

THEATRE

Shadows

Other Place, Stratford

Shadows makes an apt title for this trio of famous but seldom performed Irish plays. John Crowley, who directs, chose it because they are linked by the idea of death...

Irish history casts a baleful shadow over Yeats's Purgatory. And in his essays, Synge wrote of Aran islanders "living in a world of grey" where there are misty every week...

But why begin the evening with Riders? Both audience and actors seemed emotionally unprepared for what may be the greatest, and conceivably the only, one-act tragedy yet written. Maurya's fisherman husband and four sons have been drowned...

Anyway, Crowley instantly, inexplicably breaks the mood by getting dead Bertyle to somersault off the table while the women whoop. Does Shadow of the Glen, which follows, need so ebullient an introduction...

Purgatory involves the ruin of a beautiful house, drunkenness, greed, patricide, child murder. You can recognise it as the work of the very old Yeats less because of its poetry, which is unremarkable...

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Large grid of theatre listings including Opera & Ballet, Theatres, and various play titles with contact information and showtimes.

كوزا من الاصل



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE February 27: The Duke of Edinburgh this morning visited Southall Opportunities Centre... BUCKINGHAM PALACE February 27: The Duke of York this morning attended the launch of the 1998 Daily Telegraph Junior Golf Championship...

Weekend birthdays

Lady Rose Windsor celebrates her 18th birthday tomorrow.

Today

Mr Peter Alliss, golfer and broadcaster, 67; Sir Philip Bailhache, Bailiff of Jersey, 52; Sir Peter Baxendale, former chairman, Hawker Siddeley Group, 73; Miss Stephanie Beacham, actress, 49; Mr Alfred Burke, actor, 80; Mr John Carson, actor, 71; Dr Jonathan Clark, historian, 47; Mr William Cockburn, former chief executive, W J Smith Group, 55; Mr Robin Cook, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 52; Viscount Dilhorne, 66; Mr Oliver Everett, librarian, Windsor Castle, 55; Lord Garel-Jones, 57; Mrs H.M. Grindrod, QC, 62; Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan, film producer, 64; Admiral Sir Peter Herbert, 69; Major-General M.F. Hobbs, director, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, 61; Professor J.M. Irvine, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Birmingham University, 59; Professor Thomas Kempner, Professor of Business Studies, 66; Mr Barry McGuigan, boxer, 57; Mr Martin Marriott, former Headmaster, Canford School, Dorset, 66; Mr Brian Moore, sports commentator, 66; the Earl of Onslow, 60; Mr Robin Phillips, actor and director, 58; Dr Peter Southwell, Head Master, Christ's Hospital, 51; Mr Peter Stothard, Editor, The Times, 47; Sir John Swire, honorary president, John Swire and Sons, 71; Sir Brian Urrah, former Assistant Secretary-General, UN, 79; Vice-Admiral Sir James Weatherall, Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, 62.

Leap year

Mr Joss Ackland, actor, 70; Mr Mario Andretti, former racing driver, 56; Sir David Beattie, former Governor-General, New Zealand, 74; Lieutenant-General Sir Rodrick Cordy-Simpson, 54; Baroness Dunn, 58; Professor Ivo Hutter, physiologist, 74; Mr Alan Loveday, violinist, 70; Mr James Ogilvy, 54; Mr M.P.G. Wright, former Headmaster, Dover College, 54.

Tomorrow

Mr Harry Belafonte, singer and actor, 71; Mr David Browne, show-jumper, 58; Mr Douglas Bunn, founder, All England Jumping Course, Hickstead, 70; Sir Robert Calderwood, former chief executive, Strathclyde Regional Council, 66; Florence Calvert, former Principal, St Mary's College, Durham, 86; Mr Leslie Christie, trade unionist, 59; Mr David Comins, Rector, Glasgow Academy, 50; Mr Roger Daltrey, actor and rock singer, 54; Mr Andrew Faulds, former MP and actor, 75; Sir Allan Green, QC, former Director of Public Prosecutions, 63; Air Chief Marshal Sir Lewis Hodges, 80; Sir Michael Kerr, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 77; Captain Timothy Lawrence, 43; Professor James Lister, paediatric surgeon, 75; Mr John Napier, designer, 54; Commandant Dame Nancy Robertson, former director, WRNS, 88; Major-General P.T. Tower, 81; Sir Gerald Whent, former non-executive chairman, The Vodafone Group, 71.

Today's royal engagement

The Duke of Edinburgh, as Patron, will attend the Cornwall Rugby Football Union's quarter-final match of the Rugby Football Union's Championship...

School news

Charterhouse The Governing Body of Charterhouse has appointed Nicholas Durkin, BSc, MA, at present Secretary to the Council and Bursar of Clifton College...

Luncheon

Corporation of London To mark the visit to the City of London of the President of Estonia and Mrs Meri, the Corporation of London gave a luncheon yesterday at Mansion House...



Mark Thompson and Sophie Moore, of Clifton, Bristol, who have recently announced their engagement

Weekend anniversaries

Today

BIRTHS: Michel de Montaigne, essayist, Perigord, France, 1533; Thomas Newcomen, inventor of the atmospheric steam engine, Dartmouth, baptised this day 1633; René Renaut, inventor and naturalist, La Rochelle, France, 1683; Daniel Solander, botanist, Norrland, Sweden, 1736; Bernhard Auerbach, novelist, Nordstetten, Germany, 1812; Sir John Tenniel, illustrator and cartoonist, London, 1826; Rachel Eliza Feltz, actress, Mumpf, Switzerland, 1820; Blondin (Jean-François Gravellet), tightrope walker, St-Omer, France, 1824; Sir Charles Santley, baritone, Liverpool, 1824; Sir Wilfred Grenfell, medical missionary, Parkgate, Cheshire, 1825; Douglas Hogg, 1st Viscount Hailsham, Lord Chancellor 1928-29 and 1935-38, London, 1872; Henri Breuil, priest and archaeologist, Morlaix, France, 1877; Ben Hecht, novelist and film writer, New York, 1894; Sir Peter Medaw, medical scientist, Nobel laureate 1960, Rio de Janeiro, 1915; Brian Jones, rock guitarist, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, 1942.

Leap year

BIRTHS: Ann Lee, founder of the American sect of Shakers, Manchester, 1736; Gioacchino Rossini, composer, Pesaro, Italy, 1792; John Philip Holland, submarine pioneer, Lisincourt, Co Clare, 1840; DEATHS: John Whitegift, Archbishop of Canterbury 1583-1604, London, 1604; Edward Frederic Benson, novelist, London, 1940.

Tomorrow

BIRTHS: Caroline of Ansbach, consort of King George II, Ansbach, 1683; Sir Samuel Romilly, lawyer, London, 1747; Frédéric Chopin, composer, Żelazowa Wola, Poland, 1810; Augustus Pugin, architect of the Gothic revival, London, 1812; Lytton Strachey, writer, London, 1880; Roger Martin du Gard, novelist, Nobel laureate 1937, Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1881; Oskar Kokoscha, painter, Pöchlarn, Austria, 1886; Glenn Miller, band leader, Clarinda, Iowa, 1904; David Nixon, actor, London, 1910; Robert Lowell, poet, Boston, Massachusetts, 1917; DEATHS: Thomas Campion, musician and poet, London, 1620; George Herbert, clergyman and poet, Salisbury, 1633; Edward Moore, writer, London, 1875; George Grossmith, co-author of The Diary of a Nobody, London, 1912; Gabriele D'Annunzio, poet, dramatist and nationalist, Gardone Riviera, Italy, 1938; Jackie Coogan, actor, 1904.

Latest wills

The Ven Anthony John Morecam, of Cambridge, residential canon, Ely Cathedral 1974-84, left estate valued at £1,038,790 net. He left £500 each to St Mary's Bourne Street, SW1, All Saints, Margaret Street, St Cecilia's, Clarendon, St Gale, the Dean and Chapter of Ely Cathedral, and the additional Charities Society of Birmingham. Myer Colfax, of Hampstead, London, left estate valued at £90,705 net. He left £2,500 to Cardiff New Bryn, £1,500 to Cardiff New Hospital, £1,500 to Cardiff New Hospital, £1,500 to Cardiff New Hospital, £1,500 to Cardiff New Hospital...

Reception

Lord Mayor of Westminster The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Westminster were the hosts at a wine tasting and reception held last night at Westminster City Hall in aid of Age Concern Westminster and the Disabled Living Foundation.

Inner Temple

Judge Dyer has been elected a Master of the Bench of the Inner Temple.

Memorial service

Mr David Blairgow The Duchess of Kent was represented by Sir Lawrence Byford, President of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, at a memorial service for Mr David Blairgow...

Dinners

Masons' Company The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, accompanied by the Sheriffs and their ladies, attended the annual ladies dinner of the Masons' Company held last night at the Mansion House...

Marriage

Dr J.V. Gordon and Miss M.E. Matthews The marriage took place on February 18, 1998, at St Mary Magdalene Church, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, between John Gordon and Margaret Matthews.

University news

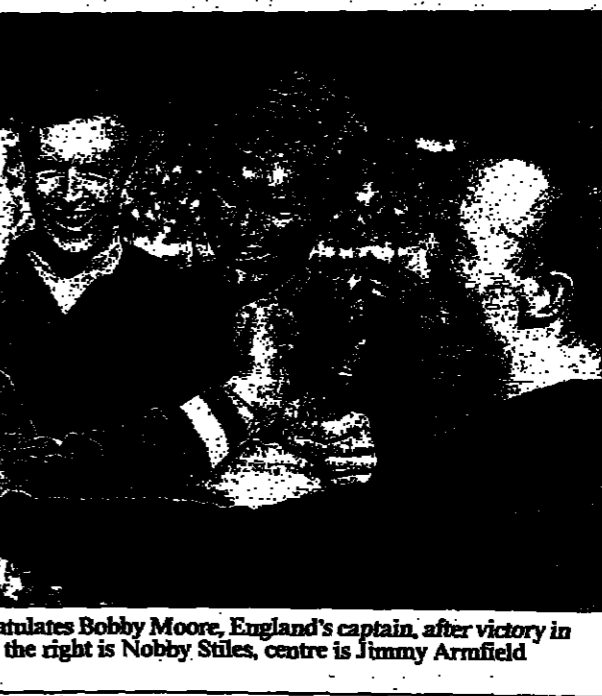
Cambridge King's College Elected into a Junior Research Fellowship in Philosophy in the external competition for four years from October 1, 1998, Neil Mansour, M Phil (London) BA (London)...

Appointment

Mr Tom Phillips has been appointed a Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery for four years.

ON THIS DAY February 28, 1993

FANS BUILD SHRINE TO BOBBY MOORE BY ALAN HAMILTON THE iron gates of Upton Park have been transformed into a shrine as the people of east London paid their own private tributes to one of the great gentlemen of English football. Bouquets piled up by the dozen at the entrance to West Ham's ground...



Alf Ramsey, manager, congratulates Bobby Moore, England's captain, after victory in the 1966 World Cup. On the right is Nobby Stiles, centre is Jimmy Armfield

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BIRTHS On February 22nd at Wycombe General Hospital, Mrs J. (Jean) (nee Gifford) and Charles, a daughter, Lily Rose, a sister for Ben and Eadie. Houghton - On February 22nd, 1998, to Kay and John, a son, Max John Wilson. Woodhouse - On February 20th, 1998, to John and Susan, a daughter, Mia Valentina. Welcome to the world. Wetherill - On February 20th, 1998, to Anne (nee Gifford) and Charles, a daughter, Lily Rose, a sister for Ben and Eadie.

DEATHS GILLIAMS - John de Cornwallis on 25th February 1998, aged 82, at his home, 14, St. James's Place, London. Buried at St. James's Church, London. GIBSON - On February 25th, 1998, at his home, 14, St. James's Place, London. Buried at St. James's Church, London. GIBSON - On February 25th, 1998, at his home, 14, St. James's Place, London. Buried at St. James's Church, London.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS TICKETS FOR SALE ANNOUNCEMENTS WE OWE A LOT TO OUR SOLDIERS THE ARMY BEVOLUNT FUND

ANNOUNCEMENTS WE OWE A LOT TO OUR SOLDIERS THE ARMY BEVOLUNT FUND

PERS

OBITUARIES

FRANCIS COULSON

Francis Coulson, MBE, co-proprietor and for many years chief of the Sharrow Bay Hotel, Ullswater, died on February 20 aged 78. He was born on June 6, 1919.

Francis Coulson was one of the most significant figures in postwar British gastronomy. At Sharrow Bay in the Lake District he and his partner Brian Sack created what must rank as the prototypical country house hotel, an idiosyncratic blend of home comforts and grand hospitality much imitated but rarely matched.

Francis Coulson was born to a Quaker family in Bedford and educated at Bedford Modern School and at Cambridge. A conscientious objector during the war, he worked in forestry before acquiring, as a member of Tubby Clayton's Toc H organisation, his first experience of catering, running canteens for servicemen.

It was through a newspaper advertisement in April 1948 that he found the house he was to turn into a British institution. A solid, rather rambling Cumbrian lodge, it perched on Ullswater's northern edge, near the village of Howtown, a few miles from Penrith. Coulson was captivated and, with his father's financial assistance, acquired the house from a Mrs Nelson, who said there were fairies at the bottom of the garden.

It was an attitude at odds with the



Francis Coulson made puddings a speciality at the Sharrow Bay Hotel overlooking Ullswater

austere spirit of postwar Britain, and the first year's profits barely exceeded £20. "It was a time when everything was so drab and everyone so fed up with rationing," wrote Elizabeth David, who, as Coulson opened Sharrow Bay, was herself at work on her book of Mediterranean Food, which in 1950 brought the smells and flavours of the sun-soaked South to a nation still struggling to keep out the cold with powdered egg and margarine.

Coulson's impact on British gastronomy was perhaps to be less dramatic than Mrs David's, but he was no less a pioneer, and his influence has been hardly less profound.

In 1952 Coulson was joined by Brian Sack, who abandoned his profession of chartered surveyor to share in the running of Sharrow Bay. The business prospered, and today

there are 22 rooms and six suites, set in a variety of buildings among 12 acres of gardens and woodland on the lakeshore. Over the years the hotel built up an astonishingly loyal staff, many of whom stayed for 20 years or more. But the two proprietors remained omnipresent long after they might comfortably have retired, their personalities and enthusiasms evident in every room and at every meal.

The sense that those who stayed there had of being guests in someone else's extraordinary home gave Sharrow Bay its great appeal (and did much to soften the blow of the bill). Coulson was an avid collector, and soon every surface in the house was cluttered with ornaments, trinkets and antiques. Guests liked the trustingly hospitable approach, and surprisingly little went missing. If

Coulson's collecting slowed in later years, it was only because there was "no room left to put anything," or so his partner claimed.

While Sack took charge of the front-of-house, it was in the Sharrow Bay kitchens that Coulson made his mark. At a time when British ideas of serious cooking still tended to involve elaborate imitations of foreign "cuisine," he had the confidence to let good ingredients speak for themselves. He was a passionate believer in fresh local produce, insisting that a fine Cumbrian chicken could be every bit as good as the much-prized poulet de Bresse, especially when served with proper gravy, rather than some fancy sauce. He was a master of the traditional English sweet course, researching and perfecting a vast repertoire that ran from syllabub to sticky toffee pudding.

from frangipane to rhubarb fool. "Almost to the level of art, are his desserts," said Egon Ronay.

He was immune to culinary and dietary fashions. Nouvelle cuisine never got a look-in. Portions were generous — breakfasts were huge — and butter and cream played starring roles. A doctor told *The Good Food Guide* that eating at Sharrow Bay was "the quickest and most pleasurable way to a coronary I know".

Yet Coulson was no boorish John Bull of the kitchen. He admitted to having learnt much from the French, and especially loved the cooking of Provence. There was refinement as well as simplicity in the dishes he created. "Cooking is an art," he said, "and all art is patience."

Francis Coulson and Brian Sack were both appointed MBE in the New Year's Honours List of 1994.

WILLI GUTTSMAN

Willi Guttman, university librarian, died in Norwich on February 13 aged 77. He was born in Berlin on August 23, 1920.

WILLI GUTTSMAN was the founder librarian of one of the finest libraries in the postwar generation of new universities, as well as a social historian of distinction. Although he arrived in Britain in 1939 as a penniless refugee from Nazi persecution, he became one of the most respected academics in Norwich. In his retirement he published a major volume, *Art for the Workers: Ideology and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany*. His life was a rare books connoisseur's dream, a social historian's and a social realist's.

There was some disappointment in Norwich among those who owned historic libraries, including Wyndham Ketton Cremer at Felbrigge, that the University of East Anglia had not appointed the librarian they expected — possibly a rare books connoisseur attracted by port and reminiscence. Guttman also startled some by choosing as his deputy the admirable Elizabeth Fudakowska, a scholar from a Polish Roman Catholic family. It may well be that the university was deprived of a few rare books that might otherwise have come its way, but the professional book purchasers Guttman employed for each subject ensured that what was achieved was a modern library serving the purposes the university had specified. He was appointed emeritus librarian on his retirement at the age of 65 in 1985.

No one in Norwich, either in the city or the university, could think of Willi Guttman without his wife Valerie. Although not a member of the university staff, she was constantly around the library building as its contents grew. Working as a psychiatric social worker, she was also a long-standing member of Norwich City Council. She was Lord Mayor of Norwich, 1979-80 — the first immigrant to be so honoured. Guttman's friends in Norwich felt that he blossomed as partner to the Lord Mayor. He joined in many political activities and clubs, including the Peripatetics discussion group. His opinions were held with intense pertinacity but spoken in a quiet, at times inaudible voice, and often with a smile.

Although Guttman never hid his socialist convictions, he was so well-informed and so interested in all whom he met that he became popular with a host of people, whatever their religion or politics. His anthology *The English Ruling Class* is instructive and witty on class in the Army, on the extravagances of Oxford, patronage in the Established Church and much else besides.

He is survived by his wife and daughter.

THE HON GERALD LASCELLES

The Hon Gerald Lascelles, former President of the British Racing Drivers' Club, died yesterday at his home in France aged 73. He was born on August 21, 1924.

A FIRST cousin of the Queen, Gerald Lascelles made his chief mark on public consciousness not as a member of the Royal Family, but in the different sphere of motor sport over a period of more than forty years' involvement with the British Racing Drivers' Club. He had been an enthusiastic motor racer in his youth and was president of the British Racing Drivers' Club from 1964 to 1991.

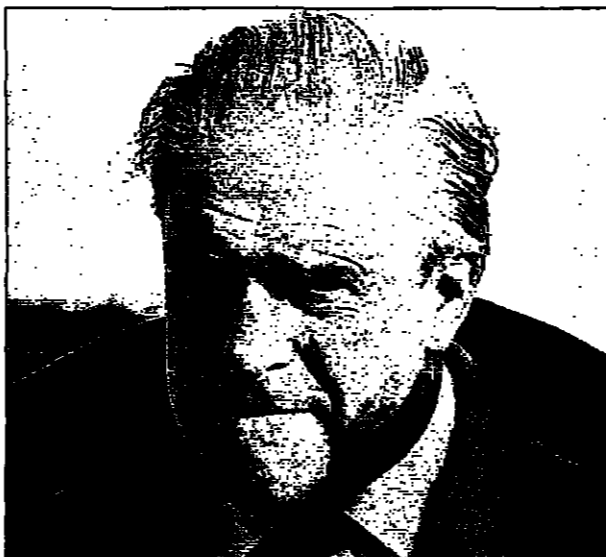
Under his guidance, the BRDC and the Silverstone Circuit which it owns, and of which he was a director, began the process of metamorphosis into the pre-eminent position they occupy in motor sport today. Lascelles was also a Fellow of the Institute of Motor Industry and its president, 1969-73, and again in 1975.

He had musical interests, too. But whereas his elder brother, George, the 7th Earl of

Harewood, inhabited the world of opera, as chairman of English National Opera and editor of *Kobb's Complete Opera Book*, Gerald Lascelles's tastes veered towards jazz, on which he made himself a considerable expert. Among other things, he co-edited the second volume of the jazz miscellany *Just Jazz 2* in 1958. He also had a number of business interests, including chairmanship for a period of Swedishholm, a kitchen furniture import firm which ceased trading in 1973.

The second grandchild of King George V, Gerald Lascelles was the younger son of the late Princess Royal, Princess Mary, and the 6th Earl of Harewood.

One of Gerald Lascelles's childhood memories was of travelling in the same train compartment to George V's funeral as his cousin the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. The duke wore a German military helmet and so terrified the lad with his sinister aspect that the young Lascelles burst into tears. But apart from these relatively few excursions into royal life, Gerald and his brother George were largely brought up in York-



shire, enjoying rural pursuits. Among other things they were encouraged to garden.

Lascelles was educated at Eton and then, in 1944, enlisted as a private in The Rifle Brigade. He was soon commissioned and attained the rank of captain. The last year of the Second World War, during which he served, was an anxious one for the family, as his elder brother was a

prisoner of war in Castle Colditz from June 1944 until the fortress was liberated in May the following year.

His company commander in The Rifle Brigade had been Tony Rolt, later to win the 1953 Le Mans 24-hour race in a Jaguar, and he fuelled Lascelles's nascent enthusiasm for motor sport. After being demobilised in 1946 Lascelles joined the West Es-

sex Car Club and was soon acting as a marshal at events. He first raced at Silverstone in a six-hour relay race in 1952, driving a Jowett Jupiter.

But, fond of driving though he was, his greatest impact was to be in race administration, acting as a judge at BRDC races at Silverstone and Oulton Park. The BRDC elected him an honorary member in 1961 and on the death of Earl Howe in 1964, he succeeded him as president. From 1986, when he relinquished his various company directorships, he threw his energies into developing Silverstone's racing school, which he saw evolve into the successful Silverstone Driving Centre. This was a particularly happy period of his presidency of the BRDC, and most days saw him at Silverstone.

Lascelles was married to Angela Dowding at St Margaret's, Westminster, in 1952. A son, Henry, was born in 1953.

From 1955 to 1976 the couple lived at Fort Belvedere, the home of the Duke of Windsor. The house was in considerable disrepair following its wartime use as the headquarters of the Commissioners of Crown Lands. Gerald

Lascelles and his wife restored it, colouring the hexagonal domed hall grey-pink, relieved with lemon and white. They replaced an unsatisfactory service wing with a more modern block and commissioned romanticised murals of Windsor and Harewood from Oliver Carson for the dining room. They sold the house in 1976.

In 1978 the marriage was dissolved. But Mrs Lascelles continued to live in Windsor Great Park and remained on good terms with the Royal Family.

Later that year Gerald Lascelles married Elizabeth Colvin, the daughter of Brigadier Sydney Collingwood, by whom it was revealed, he already had a son Martin, born in 1962. The marriage, which had to have the approval of the Queen in Council, took place in Vienna. For some years the couple lived at Rendcomb, near Cirencester, until a few years ago when they moved to a château at Sigoulès in southwestern France, which they restored from its semi-ruined state.

Gerald Lascelles is survived by his wife Elizabeth and by the sons of both his marriages.

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Notice is hereby given pursuant to 27 of the TRUSTEE ACT, 1925 that the following is a CLAIM against an INTEREST in the Estate of the late Mrs. MARY ELIZABETH BERRY, who died on 11th November 1997.

TRUSTEE ACTS

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to 27 of the TRUSTEE ACT, 1925 that the following is a CLAIM against an INTEREST in the Estate of the late Mrs. MARY ELIZABETH BERRY, who died on 11th November 1997.

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MILESTONES



Hogan "Kid" Bassey, MBE, world featherweight boxing champion, 1957-59, died in Lagos on January 26 aged 65. He was born on June 3, 1932.

French Algerian Cherif Hamia, the other leading contender for the then vacant world title, in ten rounds. He twice successfully defended the world title before the American Davey Moore proved stronger than him in Los Angeles in March 1959. Bassey tried to regain the title five months later, but failed and had the sense to retire. *Obituary published on February 23.*

George Male, Arsenal and England footballer, died on February 19 aged 87. He was born on May 3, 1910.

George Male was the last surviving member of the great Arsenal side of the 1930s, assembled by Herbert Chapman, which shifted the geographical balance of success in English football. Regarded as one of the finest right-backs ever, Male made 195 appearances for England, only the advent of the Second World War preventing him from accumulating more caps. He figured in six championship-winning campaigns for Arsenal, the last in the 1947-48 season. *Obituary published on February 26.*

The Right Rev Gordon Wheeler, Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds, 1966-85, died on February 20 aged 87. He was born in Yorkshire on May 5, 1910.

Brought up in the Church of England and first ordained as an Anglican priest, Gordon Wheeler was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1936. His abilities were recognised in posts which included a decade as administrator of Westminster Cathedral and two years as Coadjutor Bishop of Middlesbrough. He attended the Second Vatican Council and subsequently became chairman of the Liturgical Commission for England and



Wales, responsible for introducing the controversial post-conciliar changes from Latin to English in the liturgy. It was a task not entirely to his taste, since he was by instinct a traditionalist, but his tact helped to minimise opposition. From 1966 until his retirement in 1985, he was an urbane and effective Bishop of the large Catholic diocese of Leeds. *Obituary published on February 25.*

Mary Grieve, OBE, Editor of *Woman*, 1940-63, died on February 19 aged 91. She was born on April 11, 1906.

FOR some years, *Woman* magazine claimed to reach half of the female population between 16 and 45. This success was based on a very practical approach — babies and bums — and on full coverage of the all-but latest trends among housewives. As Editor Mary Grieve took her social responsibilities seriously: the recipes must be right, the diagnoses safe. During the war, she also led a group of editors in opposing female conscription. *Obituary published on February 26.*

Shares finish week on flat note

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, DISTRIBUTORS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, ENGINEERING, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HEALTHCARE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT, INSURANCE, INVESTMENT TRUSTS, MEDIA, MINING, OIL & GAS, PHARMACEUTICALS, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, RETAILERS GENERAL, SUPPORT SERVICES, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT, WATER.

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, DISTRIBUTORS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, ENGINEERING, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HEALTHCARE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT, INSURANCE, INVESTMENT TRUSTS, MEDIA, MINING, OIL & GAS, PHARMACEUTICALS, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, RETAILERS GENERAL, SUPPORT SERVICES, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT, WATER.

Advertisement for 'first direct' 24-hour banking services. Text: 'do you really want to pay bills if you don't have to? for 24 hour banking call free 0800 24 24 24'. Includes contact information and a small logo.

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, DISTRIBUTORS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, ENGINEERING, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HEALTHCARE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT, INSURANCE, INVESTMENT TRUSTS, MEDIA, MINING, OIL & GAS, PHARMACEUTICALS, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, RETAILERS GENERAL, SUPPORT SERVICES, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT, WATER.

Large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page. Text includes 'HOT SEAT', 'L hi', '£550', 'mayba', 'prof', 'ise 29', 'to der', 'up'. The text is partially obscured and appears to be part of a larger advertisement.



Gyllenhammar: something of a legend in Sweden

Attack will be the preferred form of defence in Gyllenhammar's army

If Pehr Gyllenhammar is wondering what role he should play in Britain's largest insurance group, to be created by the merger of General Accident and Commercial Union, he could do worse than take on the job of redundancy counsellor. Only two months after the Swedish industrialist arrived at the top table in CU, he has become chairman of Britain's second biggest insurance group with the ultimate responsibility of coaxing or pushing 5,000 fellow employees out of the door.

Poor old Pehr should not take all the blame. After all his chief executive at the new company, "Hurricane" Bob Scott, is the ambitious boss at General Accident. No virgin in the world of mergers. Scott joined GA after its inglorious takeover of the Kiwi insurer NZI Corporation but progressed rapidly up the ranks, replacing two thirds of the branch managers in the process.

Switching together CU and GA creates CGU. The logic of this deal is obvious and the two men have a very large patient on the slab. The combined entity will be ninth in the league table of European insurers with £100 billion of funds under management, £15.9 billion in gross premium income and a total headcount of 53,000.

However painful the surgery, the flamboyant Gyllenhammar may regard this merger as a bagatelle. The last time he attempted to forge a mega-takeover, Gyllenhammar himself ended up on the street.

The elegant 62-year-old made his career in Skandia, the insurance group, but turned down the top job in favour of the more glamorous option of running Volvo. He became something of a legend in his own country and campaigned vigorously for Sweden's entry into the European Union. But Gyllenhammar was never content with just running Sweden's leading industrial group. His imperial vision led him down all sorts of alleyways, including a flirtation with energy, a failed attempt to sell 40 per cent of Volvo to Norway in exchange for oil concessions and a plan to merge Volvo with Saab-Scania. Nevertheless, in 1993 he was running Volvo and controlling Procordia, the food manufacturing and pharmaceuticals group.

Sweden has always been too small a patch for Gyllenhammar's ambitions, however, and that year he put together a deal that would turn a three-year alliance and cross-shareholding deal with Renault into a full-blown merger.

Gyllenhammar's global vision

IN THE HOT SEAT

CV: PEHR GYLLENHAMMAR

Educated: University of Lund, Centre d'Etudes Industrielles, Geneva.

1980: Haight Gardner (maritime lawyers).

1961-64: Amphion Insurance.

1965-70: Skandia Insurance.

1971-92: AB Volvo.

1994: Lazard Freres.

1997: Commercial Union.

was not fully appreciated by patriotic Swedes. They saw the deal as an attempt by the Francophile Volvo chief (who holds the Legion d'honneur) to hand over one of the pillars of Swedish industry to French bureaucrats at the state-controlled Renault. The merger would have created Europe's third largest auto-

motive group but suspicions grew in Sweden about the French Government's commitment to privatise Renault and the likelihood that it would retain a golden share in the merged group.

Sweden's institutional shareholders rebelled, as did senior management at Volvo. Opposition to the merger became a *cause celebre*. Gyllenhammar marched out of a board meeting after delivering an ultimatum which his fellow directors chose to ignore.

His spell of unemployment was probably more luxurious than the one that may face certain CU and GA staff. He rented an office and kept on his secretary. Ten months later, he re-emerged at Lazard, the merchant bank, and joined the board of CU last December.

But the big problem facing the dashing Swedish general and his chief officer, the whirlwind Aussie, is to turn a relatively defensive move between two British insurers into something more dynamic and therefore more in keeping with their ambitions. General insurance is currently a terrible business to be in. Premiums are in the doldrums and the motor sector is barely profitable. There is too much capital chasing too little revenue and there are no

signs of insurers closing down. Gyllenhammar recognises the problem but his telling of it will afford no comfort to the troops: "This is not a cosy industry but that is not the case. Consolidation is called for and market leadership is crucial."

If this is all about market share, the industry is in for a rough ride. The curious thing about the CGU merger is that it is being characterised as a drive to become more efficient. The two parties announced this week that savings of £225 million a year would be generated by the beginning of the next century at a cost of £300 million spread over two years. Yet industry analysts remain somewhat puzzled about the claims. Unlike the Royal Sun Alliance merger, the parties to this marriage are relatively lean by insurance industry standards. It seems both sides have taken the view that it is cheaper to do mergers than compete for new business. So shareholders would do well to keep their wits about them. With Gyllenhammar on board, a leaner and meaner CGU can be expected to do more with its cash than pay a bigger dividend.

CARL MORTISHED

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BUSINESS LINK

Kwik fix

DAVID SIMONS, chief executive of the merging Somerfield and Kwik Save, is clearly imbued with the value-for-money culture that pervades the two grocery chains. Instead of paying out tens of thousands of pounds to image consultants to create a new corporate name *à la* Diageo, Simons is asking the readers of *SuperMarketing*, the trade magazine, for ideas.

"A couple of names have been suggested already," Simons tells the magazine, although he has ruled out anything that combines the two current names.

One wag, rather uncharitably, suggests Cheap & Nasty, although some of my older colleagues, mindful of the fashion for retro chic, voted for a revival of Fine Fare or Wavy Line. But I suspect that to stand a chance of getting the case of Somerfield champagne on offer, the winner will have to be a little more imaginative. Otherwise those dreaded consultants will get a look-in after all.



TO LIFFE, where the flags were put out to celebrate the launch of a new five-year gilt. Dealers were less than amused, however, to see an arch of red, yellow and black balloons: the colours of Germany and the exchange's arch Frankfurt rival. Liffe insists the balloons were gold. But who are we to believe? In the canteen, staff were festooning the walls with Union Jacks. The flags were hung upside down. According to people who know, this is a sign of distress.

Miller's tale

ROBERT MILLER, director of retail research at Kleinwort Benson, is no fan of Argos. He has been advising clients to sell despite some City hopes that GUS will raise its £1.6 billion hostile bid. He was surprised, then, to read parts of his "sell" note in the Argos defence document. He let slip word of the Argos "aggressive buying and strong product ranging" — which was used as evidence to support its defence. His other points about how Argos "suffers from lack of flexibility" and "has failed to win market share" were presumably cut due to lack of space.

Rural sport

DUNCAN DAVIDSON, chairman of Persimmon, the housebuilder, made a rare public appearance on television in defence of the countryside march. Intriguingly, the owner of an estate in Northumberland allowed cameras in to profile the estate and quiz its workers on how proposed legislation would affect jobs and wildlife. Davidson, renowned for maintaining the lowest personal profile of the northern



Davidson: low profile

housing barons (with the possible exception of Sir Lawrie Barratt), said: "We are not in a Walt Disney, Bambi-type situation here in the countryside. This is a rural factory which should be left to the only people who know how to run it — the people who live here."

Malt wit man

IF WHISKY is more to your taste than Somerfield champagne, then don't miss the April issue of *Maxim*, the men's magazine. Burn Stewart Distillers is sponsoring a new column called Tobermory writ-



Rayner: son to distill advice

ten by Adam Rayner, son of the agony aunt, Claire. Rayner *filis* is being touted as an Agony Barman who will, it seems, be dispensing "a mixture of light-hearted and serious advice to readers who write in with their problems". Each letter published will receive a bottle of Tobermory single malt. Among those seeking advice could be Burn Stewart investors, whose shares have fallen from 144p in 1996 to just 28 1/2p.

Exposed

THERE'S nothing like a quiet night at the theatre to relieve life's stresses. What could have been more pleasurable for David Rigg, former communications director of Camelot, than a pair of tickets to *The Front Page* at London's Donmar Warehouse, described as a "dazzling expose of the newspaper world". Imagine Rigg's surprise when he looked round the famously small auditorium and spotted a party of 35 journalists settling into their seats as the guests of Dino Adriano, chief executive of J Sainsbury.

THOSE working on the next mega-bid should remember that timing is everything. CU and GA hit the market on a day when two other insurers were due to announce results and left John Robins at GRE with a thin attendance of insurance analysts to hear news of the £189 million return to shareholders this week. Many of his audience arrived late, those who did not left early.

حکومت الاصل

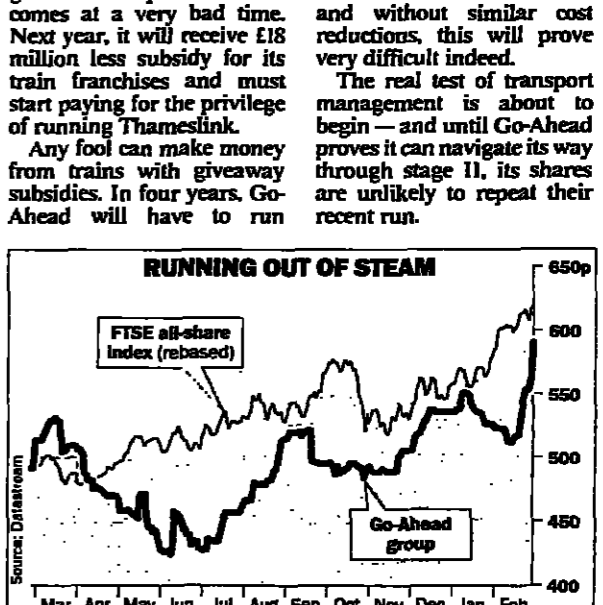
TEMPUS Grand Alliance

SHAREHOLDERS in Alliance & Leicester, the building society that became a bank last April, may be disappointed at the reluctance of Peter White, the chief executive, to buy back their shares with his £700 million of excess capital...

Go-Ahead

FOR the last year London has been a transport company's dream. With economic prosperity has come employment, which brings out commuters, who empty their pockets into the coffers of the likes of Go-Ahead.

RUNNING OUT OF STEAM



Scapa Group

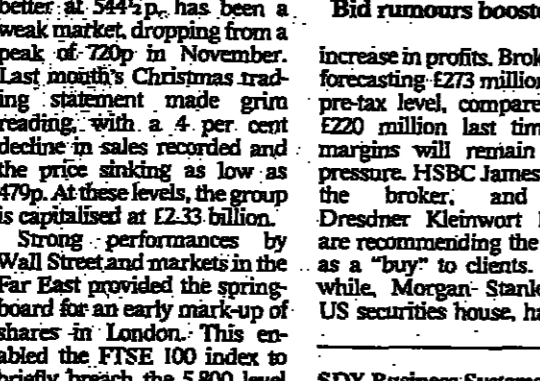
YESTERDAY'S 11 per cent share price fall provides a good opportunity to invest in Scapa Group. A profit warning is not normally a sound basis for recommending stock, but here it is a company making all the right moves...

TradePoint

LAST October TradePoint shares would sometimes be mentioned as a speculative punt by professionals in the equity markets: "Sure, you might lose your shirt, but if it ever takes off then the shares

Northern Rock poised to oust Dixons from top 100

SPECULATION is growing that Dixons, the high street electrical retailer, will get the 100th largest company when the FTSE 100 is reconstituted. Northern Rock after its conversion from a building society to a bank last year. This would give the high-flying banks an even bigger presence among the top 100 companies.



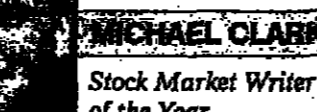
Bid rumours boosted Rolls-Royce shares 17p to 232 1/2p

increase in profits. Brokers are forecasting £273 million at the pre-tax level, compared with £220 million last time. But margins will remain under pressure. HSBC James Capel, the broker, and rival Dresdner Kleinwort Benson are recommending the shares as a "buy" to clients.

at 964p after a maiden set of figures, while Abbey National clawed back some of Thursday's loss with a rise of 7p to £12.47. The water companies remained quiet content with this week's report from the industry regulator about price cuts being implemented in the year 2000. Brokers say the cuts are now likely to be

limited to 10 per cent. Hyder rose 6p to 936 1/2p, Swire Pacific 4p to 900 1/2p, United Utilities 17p to 816p and Yorkshire Water 6 1/2p to 511 1/2p.

Shield Diagnostics climbed 30p to 650p as the company concluded a week-long tour of City brokers. They seem to have drawn the conclusion that the shares are underpriced when prospects for its AF Factor 12 treatment are taken into account. AF Factor



MICHAEL CLARK Stock Market Writer of the Year

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday): Dow Jones 8540.74 (+30.07) S&P Composite 1083.67 (+6.86)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 14831.67 (+329.97)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 11480.60 (+255.91)

Amsterdam: AEX Index 1070.33 (+2.67)

Sydney: All Ordinaries 2871.4 (+1.4)

Frankfurt: DAX 4709.63 (+17.90)

Singapore: SENSEX 1615.38 (+20.43)

Brussels: CAC 3597.76 (+17.85)

Paris: CAC 3597.76 (+17.85)

Zurich: SMI 2418.20 (+54.50)

London: FT 100 5551.4 (+16.5) FTSE 250 5767.3 (+2.5) FTSE 100 5200.0 (+8.7) FTSE 250 2796.4 (+7.8) FTSE Europe 100 2991.26 (+3.7) FTSE All-Share 2063.40 (+7.78) FTSE Non Financials 2434.79 (+8.04) FTSE Financials 1258.65 (+9.19) FTSE Govt Securities 1023.03 (+0.29)

Bargains: 7097 SDAQ Volume 426.3m

US\$ 1.0457 (+0.0028)

German Mark 2.4872 (+0.0028)

Exchange Index 105.1 (+1.1)

Bank of England official rate (4.75%)

US 100 1.2396

RPI 195.5 Jan (2.3%) Jan 1997-100

RPI 197.7 Jan (2.3%) Jan 1987-100

RECENT ISSUES

Athlete Extrusions 85p ...

Dieser B 517 ...

Enron 101 0/163 1/2 ...

Monsoon 198 ...

Quadrant Health 130p ...

Sanctuary Warrants 4s ...

RIGHTS ISSUES

Minerva n/p (199) 19 + 2s

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES: Trans Motor Gp 196p (+56p) ...

SDB Bk Sp 248p (+21p) ...

Jury's Hotel 496p (+40p) ...

Booker 241p (+18p) ...

Rolls-Royce 232p (+17p) ...

All Nippon Air 352p (+22p) ...

Dawson Hedges 165p (+10p) ...

Netherlands 2,050 (+20p) ...

Inchcape 188p (+13p) ...

Cookson 229p (+13p) ...

Treasury 558p (+30p) ...

Biocomp Intl 187p (+10p) ...

Mayco Intl 379p (+20p) ...

Shield Diff 650p (+30p) ...

Edman (HPI) 350p (+15p) ...

Harrods 361p (+13p) ...

Hays 940p (+38p) ...

DPS Furniture 570p (+30p) ...

Sainsbury 900p (+46p) ...

CRT Gp 406p (+20p) ...

Welf 270p (+13p) ...

FALLS: Sun Life p 620p (-60p) ...

NBS Adv Tech 350p (-22p) ...

Johnson 440p (-17p) ...

Enbridge 494p (-22p) ...

Gaskell 436p (-19p) ...

GLS 775p (-30p) ...

Rank Gp 333p (-11p) ...

Roberts Walters 533p (-15p) ...

WF Elect 765p (-17p) ...

Boosey Group 875p (-75p) ...

Bank Scotland 692p (-12p) ...

Ry Bk Scot 940p (-10p) ...

Closing Prices Page 26

Table of commodity prices including ICE Futures (London) and various oil products.

Table of LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES including Long Gilt, German Govt Bond, and Japanese Govt Bond.

Table of WALL STREET listing various companies and their stock prices.

Table of DOLLAR RATES showing exchange rates for Australia, Belgium, Denmark, etc.

Table of OTHER STERLING listing currencies like Argentina peso, Australian dollar, etc.

Table of EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%) listing rates for various currencies and terms.

Table of GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co) listing prices for gold, silver, etc.

Table of SWEDISH SPOT AND FORWARD RATES listing rates for various Swedish currencies.

Table of MTD RATES FOR FEB listing interest rates for various banks and currencies.

Table of FTSE VOLUMES listing trading volumes for various FTSE indices and components.

NEWS

Queen for equality in line to Throne

The Queen has made it known that she backs government plans that would introduce sexual equality into the line of succession to the Throne. In an unprecedented move, a Labour minister told the House of Lords that she "had no objection" to ending the 800-year-old tradition of royal primogeniture under which the eldest son of the monarch automatically becomes heir even if he has an elder sister.

Ministers in disarray over march

The Government sought to discredit tomorrow's countryside march through central London after ministers were in disarray over whether to attend the event, expected to attract up to 200,000 people.

Ulster alert

Security forces were on alert after Northern Ireland's Court of Appeal quashed Paratrooper Lee Clegg's conviction for murdering a joyrider.

Tribute concert

Friends of Diana, Princess of Wales, including Sir Cliff Richard and Chris de Burgh will headline the tribute concert that could raise £1 million.

Rugby star jailed

Tony Neary, the golden boy of 1970s English rugby, was jailed for stealing £288,000 from his mentor's family.

Mothers' victory

Two mothers who were sacked after becoming too ill to return to work from maternity leave won a landmark ruling.

Clinics crisis

Fertility clinics will not be able to operate successfully if payments to sperm donors cease.

Playing at ruling the world

Children will don the garish jackets of City traders, mimic their shouting and have the chance to become virtual millionaires playing a computer game being prepared for the Millennium Dome. The chance to become a "Master of the Universe" is part of a £12 million public relations exercise.

Castle of dreams

A ruined Irish castle has fired the imagination of Jeremy Irons who plans a retreat and a holiday home for deprived children.

Top table

Craftsmen who have laboured for six weeks on a dining table for the Lord Chancellor's residence showed off their work.

Lockerbie setback

Britain lost the first round in its legal battle with Libya over the trial of the two men accused of the Lockerbie bombing.

Art legal battle

A leading international art dealership has lost a £2.5 million legal battle with descendants of Kurt Schwitters, the German Dadaist sculptor.

Bombing clue

The FBI stepped up efforts to find the chief suspect in the bombing of an Alabama abortion clinic after links with other bombings.



Mair Hughes, a farmer's wife, and Alex Ford, a huntsman, preparing at Bridgend, South Wales, for the countryside march. Pages 1, 6-8

NEWS FEATURES

Age of aquariums: Low start-up costs and high returns are making aquariums a growing attraction.

Musical drama: A damage control operation is under way to salvage the good name of the most flamboyant woman in the music business.

Vendetta: The Russian mafia is suspected of a mass murder in Paris at first blamed on a 16-year-old boy.

First Lady: James Bond with the wife of the UN leader who dealt with Saddam.

OPINION

Washington Way: The proper response to charges of improper behaviour is to confront them directly, to defend the defensible and apologise for error.

Tradition's steps: Marchers who meet in London this weekend are treading a traditional pathway. Their voices, if not all their demands, should be heard.

Countrywide march: funding of arts; Lord Irvine; Ash Wednesday; Iraq; Irish peace talks; Big Bang.

LETTERS

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: While they park their Range Rovers on our yellow lines, we shall picket the hedgeless prairies and grain silos.

Caryl Phillips: Soon we will all come to depend on issued cinema and television drama for our knowledge of history.

Francis Coulson, of the Sharrow Bay Hotel, Ullswater; The Hon Gerald Lascelles, British Racing Drivers club; Willi Gutschman, university librarian.

BUSINESS

Share buyback: Alliance & Leicester, the building society which became a bank, traded more than a million private shareholders with the prospect of £350 million.

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 2.5 to 5767.3. Sterling slipped from 105.2 to 105.1.

Mortgages; Irish Peps; tax accountants.

SPORT

Cricket: Both West Indies' openers were out for 38 before Lara and Chanderpaul led a recovery in the fourth Test.

Football: Liverpool must return to winning form at Aston Villa to keep their season alive.

Tennis: Tim Henman was knocked out in the quarter-finals of the Guardian Direct Cup by Yevgeny Kafelnikov.

SECTIONS

the times

Eric Clapton: From rock to counselling... Page 16
Web of deceit: Commune in cyberspace... Page 24
Emergency: A nightclub's 999 nights... Page 38
Never too late: Father rebelled at 60... Page 80

TREASURY

Interview: Matt Damon, Hollywood's current hottest property... Page 6
Joseph Heller: Memoir of his early years... Page 14
Photography: Cynical eye on reality... Page 24
La Ciclonera... Page 10
Listings... Pages 24-43

WEEKEND

Wales: Shrugging off the English yoke... Pages 1, 3
Peter Ackroyd: In Thomas More's London... Page 2
Filing: Encouraging of office romances... Page 17
Under fire: Confessions of a bodyguard... Page 23
Travel... Pages 25-33

HEALING

A-Z guide to complementary medicine: from male infertility to osteoporosis

Vision

Seven-day guide to television and radio
mag
A green special issue on saving the planet

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,727

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 496, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbered squares and clues.

- ACROSS
1 Beat using stick (5).
4 Low accommodation, in a fashion, with little room (9).
9 This Johnny could show more ecstacy (9).
10 Quartz found in a mountain pass (5).
11 Movable feasts for elderly waiters (5,2,6).
14 August follower of Irish clan (4).
15 Belonging to second joint on leg, for example (10).
18 Cook's fat, and getting more dumpty (10).
19 Drug addict's employer (4).
21 Jumbo set aside - it's viciously difficult (5,8).
24 Drop a theatrical piece (5).
25 School places for those needing remedial treatment (9).
27 Titled for Sophia - one making her cross? (9).
28 Become dejected listening to O-Ive, say (5).
DOWN
1 Start out to look quickly inside ancient manuscript (10).
2 Settled a way round (3).
3 Cut out drill without hesitation (6).
4 Revolutionary organisation has business manager initially put in prison (9).
5 Stagger from place where one may be left in trouble (5).
6 Broadcasts are a must for those wanting play purely for enjoyment (8).
7 Inersensitivity shown when one is put out (11).
8 In Baltimore we root for the pitcher (4).
9 Fitting pocket (11).
12 Presumably it can throw light on the other side (6,4).
13 Push particular goods - they help to raise sales, we hear (9).
14 Male worker concealing name still (8).
15 Thwarted, being in a place without parking (6).
16 To succeed, English knight has to go to law (5).
17 In the sound, notices a cutter (4).
18 Scene of carnival and endless wild revelry (3).

Answers to crossword puzzle No 20,727.

INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions
UK Weather - All regions 0336 444 910
UK Roads - All regions 0336 401 410
Inland 0336 401 746
Road 0336 401 747
National Motorways 0336 401 748
Continental Europe 0336 401 910
Channel crossing 0336 401 388
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European Fuel costs 0336 401 886
French Motorways 0336 401 887
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you may have to use a pull receive mode.

Automotive Accessories Development Ltd

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0336 401 886
0336 401 887
0336 401 888
0336 401 889

HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY
Sun sets: 5:27 pm
Moon sets: 7:45 am
MORNING
Sun sets: 5:41 pm
Moon sets: 8:15 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY
Abandon 2:16
Belfast 8:21
Cardiff 8:07
Dover 6:48
Dublin 0:19
Edinburgh 1:20
Glasgow 1:30
Hull 1:30
London 1:30
Lough 1:30
Newcastle 1:30
Plymouth 1:30
Portsmouth 1:30
Southampton 1:30
Swansea 1:30
Tees 1:30
Wolverhampton 1:30

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Manchester 12C (54F), lowest day max: Wick, Highland, 6C (43F). Highest night: Aberdeen Highland, 1.5C (35F). Highest sun: Margate, Kent, 4.1C

FORECAST

General: Scotland will have a very cold day with freezing sun, spells and snow showers. The heaviest and most frequent snow showers will be in the north and west with drifting in the strong northwesterly wind. Northern Ireland, north England and north Wales will also be very cold, with gusty winds, sunshine and heavy showers of hail, sleet and snow. The rest of England and Wales will see better sunny spells and a few wintry showers.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Table with columns for location, sun, rain, max, min, wind, etc.

ABROAD

Table with columns for location, sun, rain, max, min, wind, etc.

FORECAST

Channel Isles: chilly with blustery showers. A fresh NW wind. Max 8C (46F).
Central N, NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee: blustery cold with snow showers and wintry spells. Strong and gusty NW wind. Max 4C (39F).
Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE & NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: cold with periods of snow and blizzards over hills. A strong and gusty NW wind. Max 1C (34F).
SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, Northern Ireland: very cold with hail and snow showers. Drifting snow over hills. A strong and gusty NW wind. Max 3C (37F).
Republic of Ireland: sunny intervals, and showers turning to sleet and snow on high ground. Wind NW fresh. Max 7C (45F).
Outlooks tomorrow will be very cold with wintry showers. The west of the snow will be in the north while some sheltered southern areas will stay mostly dry and bright. On Monday and Tuesday rain will spread from the southwest, preceded by snow in the north and east.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Table with columns for location, sun, rain, max, min, wind, etc.

ABROAD

Table with columns for location, sun, rain, max, min, wind, etc.

Map of the British Isles showing weather conditions and temperature zones.

Travel advertisements for Toronto with Niagara, Monaco Grand Prix, Orient-Express, Venice, Florence, Rome, Oriana, Concorde, and QE2 with Concorde.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including 'glan', 'sent', 'innin', 'out o', 'ontro'.

UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

MATCH OF THE DAY

Leboeuf on Chelsea v Manchester United PAGE 39

DANNY BAKER

Why youth must not have its day PAGE 35

BIG TOP COLLAPSES

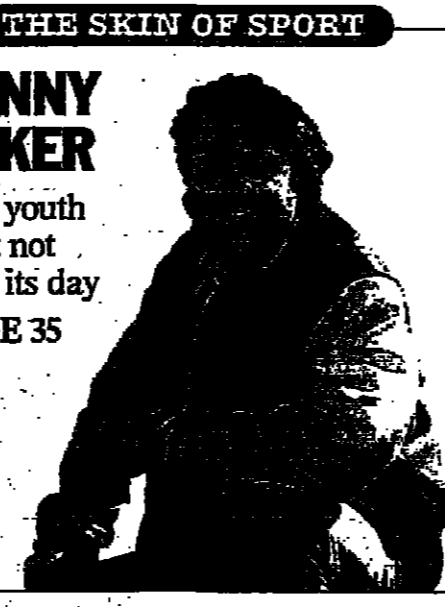
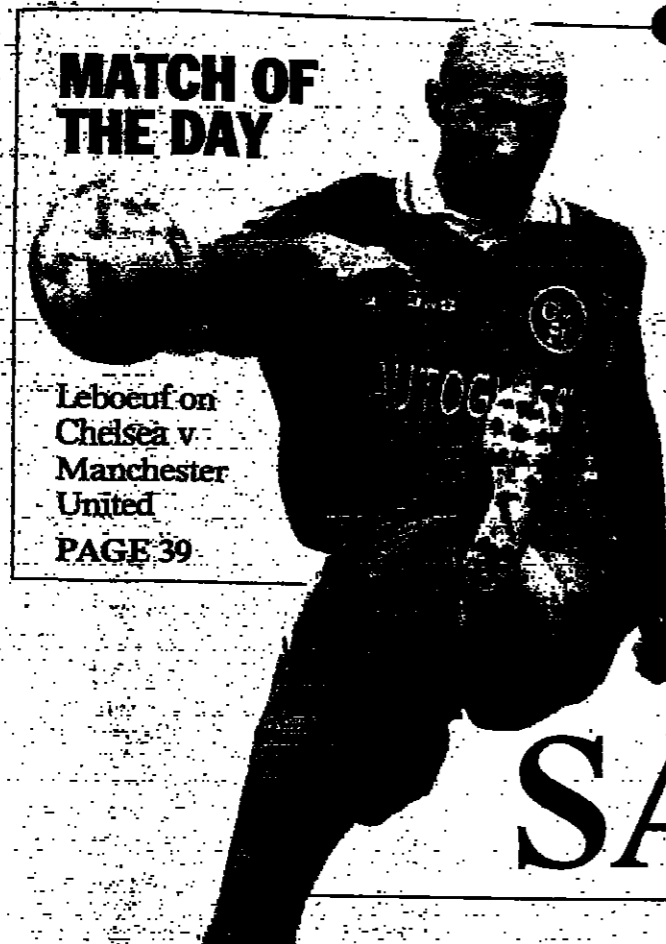
Henman folds in the tent PAGE 34

WEEKEND MONEY

The slimming club that made a fat profit PAGE 62

go

Revealed - the first new Rolls Royce for 18 years PAGE 45



THE TIMES SATURDAY SPORT 11 PAGES

FEBRUARY 28 1998

WEST INDIES MAKE CAUTIOUS START IN GEORGETOWN

England sent spinning out of control

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT IN GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

WITH team selection and strategy dictated by the fear that the bare Georgetown pitch will crumble, England was not a good moment for Michael Atherton to lose the toss for the first time in four Tests. Brian Lara, ably assisted by Shivnarine Chanderpaul, spent much of the day making it look crucial. Having dealt summarily with the West Indies opening pair, England laboured unavailingly in the afternoon sunshine against the two left-handers. An adventurous selection, including two spin bowlers, was correct for the conditions but batting will become steadily more bizarre as this game proceeds, and a first-innings total of more than 350 could well be decisive.

Shashi shins 34

Most conversations in Georgetown presently involve an amalgam of the weather, politics and cricket, and both of the first two are having an effect on the third. Drought conditions, in a country where the heavens traditionally open at the sight of a set of stumps, have turned a customarily verdant ground into a desert, and a rough one at that. The continuing controversy about the conduct of Guyana's recent elections, meanwhile, is arousing strong feelings once more. The reopening of parliament on Thursday brought more street protests and the stoning of a car in which the President, Mrs Janet Jagan, was travelling. Yesterday morning, unknown to most of the crowd inside Bourda, an anonymous phone call to the ground warned of a bomb in the England dressing-room. Wise to the regularity of such threats in this city, the



Testing times: the anguish of Croft, left, and the torment of Headley, warned for running on the pitch, typify a troubled day for the England bowlers in Guyana



Rebecca Nadeau

but in the eighth over he became Fraser's 21st victim of the series. Forced onto the back foot, and beaten by a shade of movement, he edged low to first slip, where Thorpe's catch would have looked straightforward if Stewart had not dived distractingly across him. The one thing England could not afford was to lose one of their quicker bowlers, so there was cause for concern when Headley attracted a second official warning from Steve Bucknor, the umpire, for following through on the

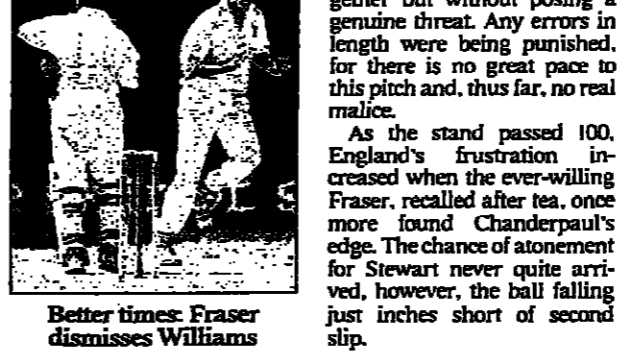
pitch. This was the equivalent of a yellow card - one more transgression, and he would be off for the remainder of the innings. Atherton persisted with him and was rewarded when the strokeless Campbell succumbed. Headley, into his eighth over and justifying his captain's praise of his stamina, found extra bounce outside off stump and Campbell, unable to withdraw his bat, was caught behind. He had faced 47 balls in scoring ten runs and aggregates only 62 in the series. His place is clearly in jeopardy. Chanderpaul's promotion, ahead of Hooper, brought applause from the crowd and a long period of regret for England. He should not have reached double-figures but Stewart, at second slip, put down a chance off Fraser that he would expect to catch eight times out of ten. As Lara was playing Croft with suspicion - and no little luck - England went to lunch in hope. The optimism seeped away during a wicketless afternoon in which the bat dominated for the first time in the series.

Lara conquered his occasional impetuosity and played regally, while Chanderpaul, who made his Test debut here against England four years ago, once more treated his hometown crowd to a demonstration of his stately, inscrutable style. Croft was into his tenth over, with only 11 runs conceded, when Lara announced the shift of control, his quick feet carrying him down the pitch for an on-drive that sailed into the second tier of the new stand. He pulled a second six when Atherton recalled Headley for a third spell and, by tea, the spinners were operating together but without posing a genuine threat. Any errors in length were being punished, for there is no great pace to this pitch and, thus far, no real malice. As the stand passed 100, England's frustration increased when the ever-willing Fraser, recalled after tea, once more found Chanderpaul's edge. The chance of atonement for Stewart never quite arrived, however, the ball falling just inches short of second slip.

SCOREBOARD FROM GEORGETOWN

Table with cricket scores: West Indies won toss, WEST INDIES: First Innings, 10 (70 min, 48 balls, 1 over), 13 (21 min, 20 balls, 1 wk, 1 over), 13 (22 min, 18 balls, 1 wk, 1 over), 13 (22 min, 18 balls, 1 wk, 1 over), 13 (22 min, 18 balls, 1 wk, 1 over), 13 (22 min, 18 balls, 1 wk, 1 over), 13 (22 min, 18 balls, 1 wk, 1 over), 13 (22 min, 18 balls, 1 wk, 1 over), 13 (22 min, 18 balls, 1 wk, 1 over), 13 (22 min, 18 balls, 1 wk, 1 over).

BETTER TIMES: FRASER DISMISSES WILLIAMS



Better times: Fraser dismisses Williams

Faithful fans wish plucky loser the best of British

Come on Tim! The crowd were yelling. Tim grasped his racket more tightly and made a chopping movement in the air. He set his finely drawn face in a determined expression and a thought-bubble appeared above his head. "Serving for the match!" he said. He drilled the ball for an ace, 123 miles-an-hour "Donner und Blitzen," exclaimed his opponent (a rather sketchy German). "Game, set and match to Tim," the umpire said. The match was over. Tim had been surrounded by admiring fans who were jolly serious about tennis in an amateur. British tennis fan was 10 years old. Tim had been called, "Come on, Timmy," was what they called, from the start. "Play up, Timbo." Now he was playing his unimpressive professional tournament, at 23 years old, ranked 21st in the world and an encouraging "come on, Tim" was still on the lips of those loyal, spitting fans. But the thing was, despite the years of

experience, something odd had happened; Tim was stuck as a character cut-out from a postwar comic-book story called "The Most Promising Boy at the Tennis Club". All around him were virile, modern, ruthless international tennis players who - how he envied them! - remained equally visible sideways as head-on. By contrast, Tim was paper-thin and passionlessly plucky, attached to his clothes by little tabs hooked to the shoulders. Tim could outplay these he-men, on the right day; moreover, he could do many things they could not (slide under locked doors; roll himself up for easy transport by cardboard tube). Yet his inability to fill out bodily was like being a carved-wood Pinocchio in a world of flesh and blood. "Here comes paper boy," other players whispered unkindly behind his back. To his face they advised: "Eat East!" But though he ate and ate

and put on several pounds, nobody could see the difference. Greg was hugely to blame. Just when Tim was due to stop being promising, an unexpected narrative development in "The Most Promising Boy" knocked all plans away. Greg arrived from nowhere - an improbable Brit with headband and American accent, who served at 140 miles per hour and had never heard of egg powder. Tim had dealt with such blighters before ("game, set and match to Tim"), but this time the grinning Greg wasn't meant to be the villain of the piece, rather the saviour. Which was a real turn-up for the books, and for Tim. Thus, Greg thrusted Johnny Foreigner on Tim's behalf and, with a sparkle of his excellent equine teeth, Greg transformed the story into "The Most Successful Boy in the Tennis Club

LYNNE TRUSS

Mortgage Express advertisement with text: 'It's simple: invest in bricks and mortar.' and 'Mortgage Express has a mortgage product which makes investing in property worth considering again. You can borrow for a number of different houses, and can still enjoy flexible payment options. There's no Mortgage indefinitely. Guarantees to pay for and we're interested in rental income as well as personal income. Becoming a landlord has never been easier.' Includes logo for Winner 1996 UK Quality Award and contact number 0500 212 854.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Establishment man on the way up

There were two surprises at Oakwell on Wednesday night. The first was that Barnsley knocked Manchester United out of the FA Cup...



the prospect of lining up opposite Graeme Le Saux, his rival for the left wing-back role in the England side...

Oliver Holt remains free of any of the arrogance that can so often accompany a player's rise to stardom...

right of midfield, where he has provided Ferguson with rich compensation for the absence of Nicky Butt and Paul Scholes...

'Neville stands at the top end of the spectrum of devotion to the cause'



On the ball: Neville's consummate professionalism drives him on. Photograph: Sean Botterill/Allsport



Neville's mind is set on becoming a regular for club and country

Chelsea, AS Monaco, Sheffield Wednesday, West Ham United, Arsenal, Monaco again: he rattled them off as if by rote...

is here and he has got tremendous faith in his players. He would like me to play more for United and I would too, but having a rest sometimes keeps me sharp...

Dublin shoots to top of Liverpool wanted list

THE loss of Robbie Fowler was bad enough, but Liverpool saw more than their striker limp from the field against Everton last Monday evening...

Give Collymore fresh chance, says Gregory

JOHN GREGORY, the new Aston Villa manager, believes Stan Collymore will prosper more than anybody from the change that saw him take over from Brian Little...

Van Hooijdonk the big game hunter

PIERRE VAN HOOIJDONK is mean, sometimes moody but mostly magnificent. He has scored 26 goals this season - with his head, from close range or extreme distance...

Failing to see funny side of shaggy-dog story

A DOG is man's best friend, right? Not to the players of Gwynfi, who, but for canine intervention, would probably have earned a replay against Treowen, their Welsh national league rivals...

WILLIAM HILL FREE £10 BET LIVE SATURDAY MORNING ACTION 7/4 CHELSEA 9/4 DRAW MAN. UTD. 5/4

embark on company BRIAN ANVILLE

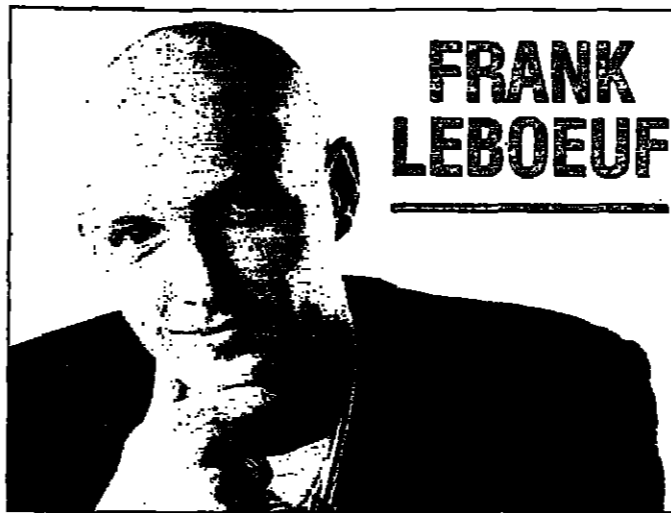
FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Why we need cups to drink more of Luca's champagne

I am fairly certain that there will not be any champagne in the Chelsea dressing-room before kick-off this morning...

will be far readier for them than I'm sure there are many players who, nearing their mid-thirties, would have done just that.

walked away from the game and I'm sure there are many players who, nearing their mid-thirties, would have done just that.



FRANK LEBOEUF

start of his reign and it seemed to work. If there was a hangover from the defeat at Leicester City, it was purely down to fatigue rather than over-celebration.

Europe. I am also sure he would be happy at the prospect of life in London. There are many France internationals who are excited at the prospect of playing in the Premiership. Watch this space.

Public passions Unfortunately, and very frustratingly, I was limited to the substitutes' bench that game against Norway, but that gave me a better opportunity to judge the reaction of the French public to our 3-3 draw.

I look back to Euro 96 and I think it is a shame that England played all their matches at Wembley. I know that it is the national stadium, but the team is representing the whole country and not just London.

The game also showed that Norway could be one of the surprise packages of the tournament. Excellently led by Tore Andre Flo, my team-mate, they were well organised and counter-attacked with pace.

hard group, but it will be interesting to see how they fare against Brazil and Scotland. They could cause a few upsets.

If Tore was Norway's outstanding individual, the France man of the match was Zinedine Zidane. The Juventus player was superb yet again and there is no doubt that he can be one of the stars of the World Cup.

I have been invited to attend the premiere of The Affair in the Jura Music, which means getting to the semi-finals at least.

I like nothing better than to watch a great film and, I have to admit, I was very impressed to watch Eric Cantona's performance in a feature film recently alongside his brother.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Table with columns for Rank, Team, Played, Points, Goal Diff, Home (W, D, L, F, A), Away (W, D, L, F, A), Last 10 Matches (W-D-L), and Current Form.

WEEKEND MATCHES

Table listing football matches for today and tomorrow, including Premier League, National League, and various regional leagues.

ATTACK table showing goals scored and average per game for various teams.

SCORING TRENDS table showing goals per half for various teams.

SCORERS table listing top scorers in the Premiership.

CAUTIONS table showing cards issued (yellow and red) for various teams.

REFEREES table listing referees for various matches.

DEFENCE table showing goals conceded and average per game for various teams.

CLEAN SHEETS table showing clean sheets and failed attempts to score for various teams.

HOME table showing attendance and average for home games.

AWAY table showing attendance and average for away games.

INTERNET table listing official websites for various clubs.

COVERAGE table listing television and radio coverage for various matches.

Advertisement for 'WELL HAVE TO FIGHT THEM ON THE BEACHES' featuring a cartoon and text about football tickets.

Statistics compiled by Julian Desborough

ATHLETICS

Baldock in fast lane as Wariso falls at the first

FROM DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT IN VALENCIA

SOLOMON WARISO has been Transatlantic travelling between London and Los Angeles this winter...

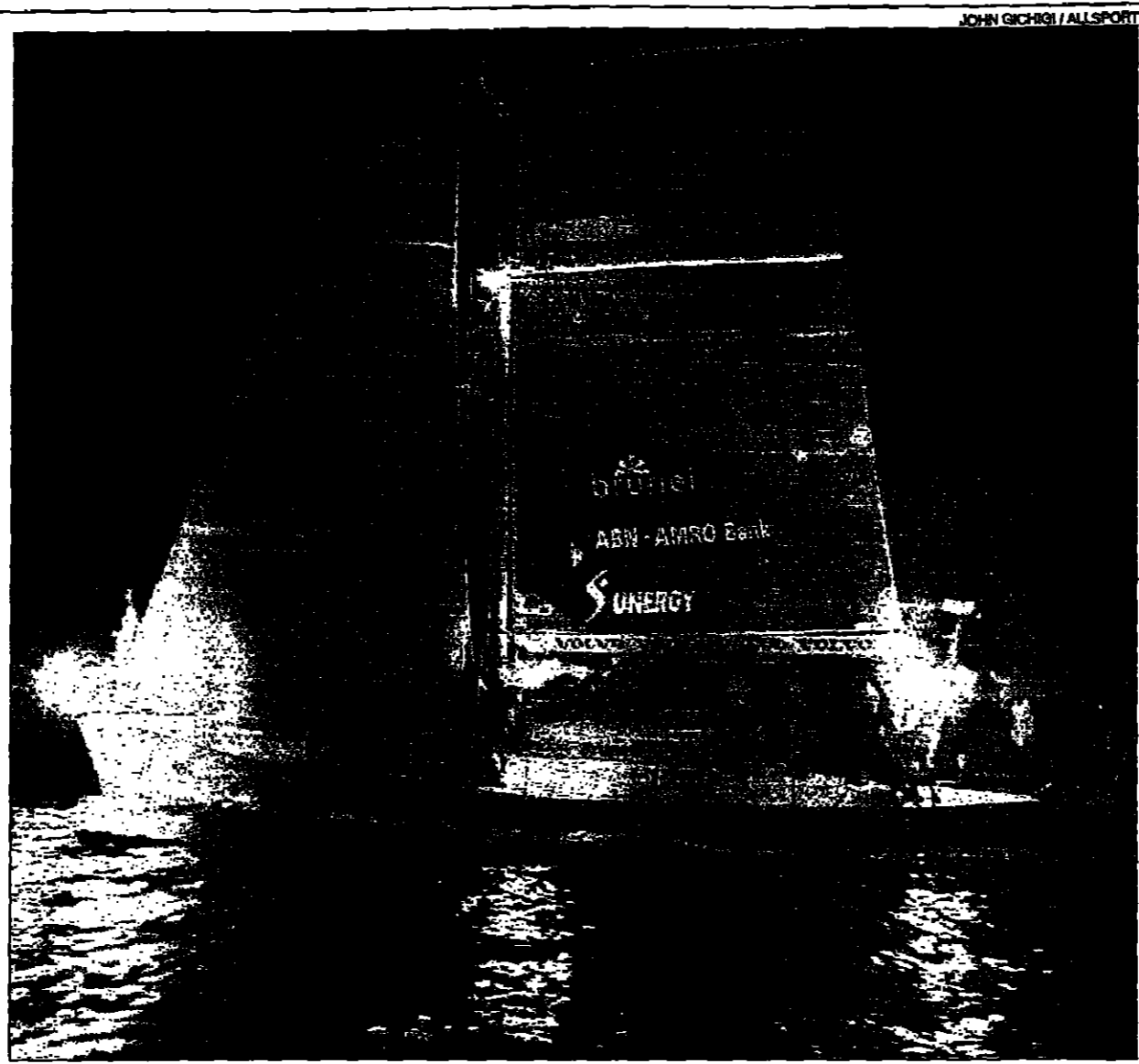
Sean Baldock has been splashing through the puddles and dodging the football boots...

Now guess which one went out in the first round of the 400 metres at the European indoor championships here yesterday...

Wariso arrived here on top of the world rankings for the season, helped there by Michael Bruce...

In the absence of Messrs Black, Thomas, Baulch, Ladejo, Richardson and now Wariso, Baldock is left to shoulder British hopes...

Wariso apart, the first session went well for Britain's medal prospects. All three men - Dwan Chambers, Jason Gardener and Darren Braithwaite - progressed through the first round of the 60 metres...



Crew members of BrunelSunergy let off flares as they cross the finish line for a surprising fifth leg second place

Underdog shows the way home

FROM EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT IN SAO SEBASTIAO

IT WAS 3.15am local time when BrunelSunergy finally hit the dock to finish second in the fifth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race yesterday...

They were good enough upwind to hold off the determined challenge of the Americans on Cheslie Racing all the way up the South American coast...

Quarrie, 48, from Lymington, in Hampshire, is one of the oldest people competing in the race and is two years down the road from life-saving heart surgery...

Andrew Cape, the navigator on Toshiba, which was still sailing in sixth place yesterday, said Brunel had done little more than my two-year-old son does when pushing his plastic lawn-mower...

RUGBY LEAGUE

Cumbria duo expose lack of foresight

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

AT A time when disparities between Super League clubs and semi-professionals of the lower divisions have never been so pronounced...

The fact that both sides are based in rugby league's Cumbria hotbed is a pertinent reminder to those in the professional ranks who harp on about establishing testaments outside the heartlands...

Swansea, Glasgow or Dublin are unlikely to establish clubs next year, because the newly-united competition in Australia will not now discard four teams at the end of the season...

No amateur club has reached the quarter-finals since 1906 and, given the unkindness of their draw away to Super League opponents...

The lesson from the previous round was that the lower division sides are now way out of their depth against the elite. One fears for Dewsbury at home to Wigan Warriors...



Edwards: cup specialist

where the outcome could be decided. The BBC cameras transfer tomorrow to St Helens, in the hope that Warrington Wolves can give the holders more of a match than Featherstone Rovers managed two weeks ago...

RUGBY Cumbria duo expose lack of foresight Rodk return lifts h of up

ay scho allow

GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

Table of football fixtures including Premier League, Championship, and various regional leagues.

Table of rugby union fixtures including Premiership, Championship, and regional leagues.

Table of rugby league fixtures including Super League and Championship.

Table of other sports fixtures including tennis, badminton, and table tennis.

TOMORROW

Table of fixtures for the following day, including football and rugby.

OTHER SPORT

Table of fixtures for other sports such as tennis, badminton, and table tennis.

SNOW REPORTS

Table providing snow reports for various regions, including depth, conditions, and forecasts.

Advertisement for 'No Limits' magazine, featuring a woman's face and text: 'THE WORLD'S NO.1 ADVENTURE LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE... HITS THE UK'.

Advertisement for 'No Limits' magazine, featuring a woman's face and text: 'ON SALE NOW! £2.75'.

go

It's the Rolls-Royce of launches

Alan Copps sees the BMW-engined Silver Seraph unveiled in a manner befitting its heritage

If you're going to sell a classy car, you need a classy show. And Rolls-Royce launches are rare occasions. Introducing only the ninth new model in its 90-year history, the company, once a byword for formality, chose to play a guessing game with its guests: what would the new BMW-engined car be called?

In a makeshift theatre at the end of a long white corridor deep in the heart of the Crewe factory, marketing director Ian McKay finished his speech and offered a clue as the veil was lifted from the silver car and it began slowly turning on its dais, soprano Joanna Lunn took the stage and the haunting notes of Handel's *Let the Bright Seraphim* filled the auditorium.

It was all a touch surreal for the assembled guests. "It's the Silver Seraph," whispered one. "The Silver Seraph?" I wondered.

As the final notes died away, there was another *coup de theatre* as the curtains of the backdrop parted to reveal a quarter-mile long vista of the company's new production hall. The effect was electric. In a few moments we had set eyes for the first time on the Silver Seraph and on the first moving production line at a Rolls-Royce factory. Eat your heart out Henry Ford — his first line was rolling in 1913.

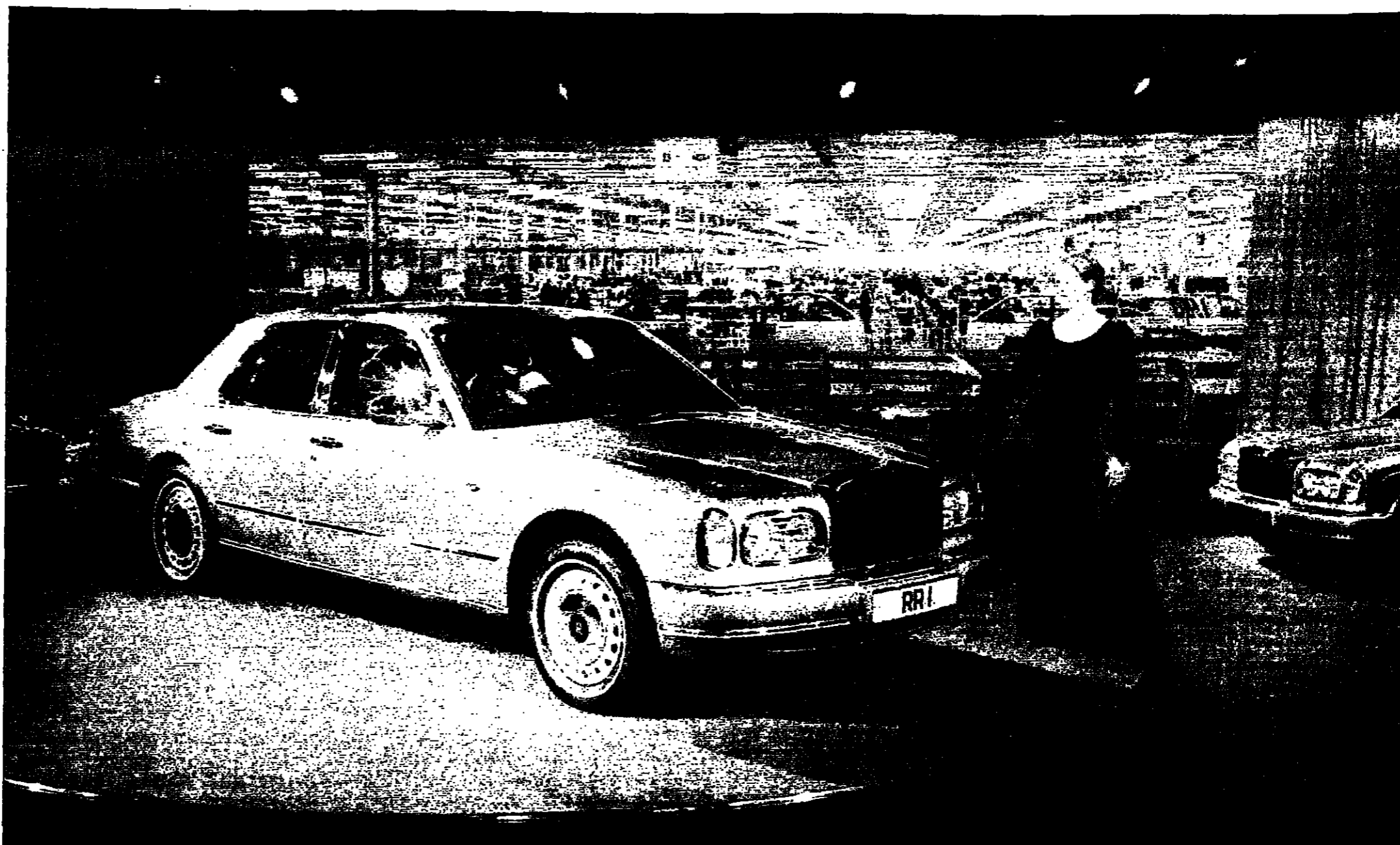
To use the motor industry jargon for the unveiling of a new car, it was the Rolls-Royce of "reveals". But it's one thing to produce the Rolls-Royce of reveals, quite another to come up with the Rolls-Royce of motor cars. Whether the world really needs a new Rolls-Royce in these environmentally conscious days is a legitimate question. But sales figures suggest that demand is still there. Even with a near-50-year-old engine in an 18-year-old model, the company sold 1,918 cars in 1997, the fourth successive year that sales had risen.

But this new model — powered by a V12 BMW engine much tweaked by Rolls-Royce engineers — is not just about selling motor cars, as the chaps from Crewe still insist upon calling them. It's about selling the company that bears one of the most famous brand names in the world. For during the latter stages of its development, parent company Vickers has been deep in negotiation with BMW and others for the sale of Rolls-Royce Motors.

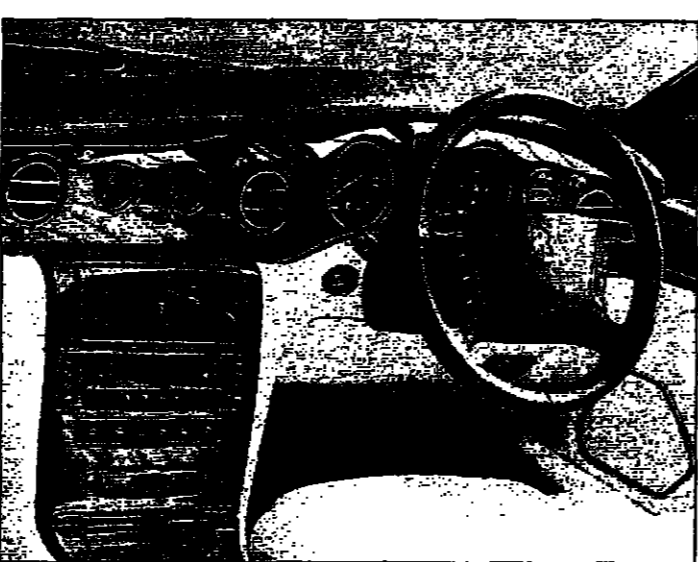
What Henry Royce would have made of such an operatic production, I don't know. "Whatever is rightly done, however humble, is noble," says a quotation of his over the production line. Understatement was part of the Rolls-Royce myth. Until very recently the company refused to divulge such mundane things as the power of its engines, simply reassuring customers that it was "adequate".

But the tone of this launch reflects the mood of a company trying to sell itself. It was a high-risk strategy: one false note and it could all have appeared ghastly, naff and damaging. But because the act had class, it worked.

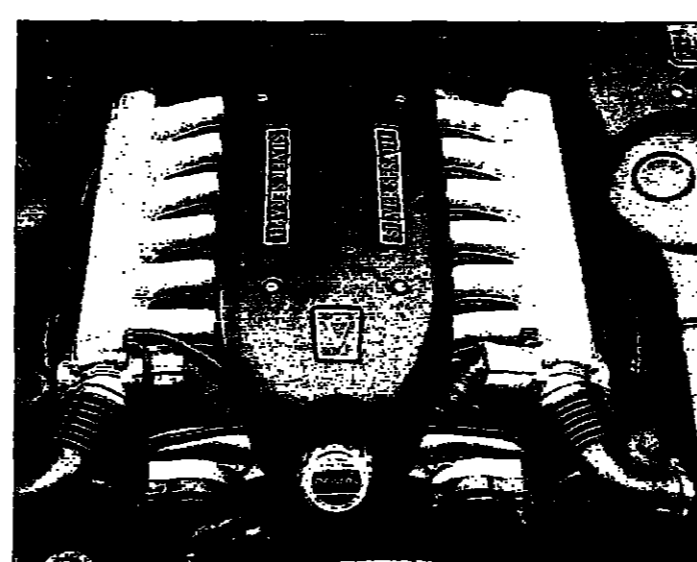
This week 500 of the company's most loyal customers were invited to Crewe to witness the show and the new car. Next Tuesday it takes



High-drama launches can be naff — this was anything but: soprano Joanna Lunn sang Handel's *Let the Bright Seraphim* as the car was unveiled in front of Rolls-Royce's first moving production line



Ventilation controls are among the few parts carried over from the previous model. Tweaked BMW engine, right, can feel busy



place before a more critical audience when the Seraph — its name refers to the highest order of celestial beings, quite a name to live up to — is officially launched at the Geneva Motor Show. The most revealing line in McKay's presentation was his ambition that the Seraph would establish itself as "the Rolls-Royce of motor cars", a tacit admission that the outgoing models, despite the sales figures, could not really pretend to the absolute standard of excellence and reliability that the words "Rolls-Royce" imply. Graham Morris, chairman of Rolls-Royce since last year, is confident the Silver Seraph will regain that reputation. It is hard to

exaggerate the company's achievement in taking this new model from drawing board to full production in just three years. It has involved retraining more than 50 per cent of the 2,600 workforce at Crewe, in some instances teaching new skills to craftsmen of 20 years' service. It has revolutionised working methods and ironically leaves the company excelling at exactly the opposite skills to those Rolls and Royce founded its reputation on. They produced a chassis of unsurpassed solidity, and silent engines second to none. The bodywork depended upon the customer's choice of specialist coach-builder. Now there is no separate chassis, the engines come from BMW and Rolls-Royce builds the body, the specialist coachbuilders Mulliner Park Ward are part of the company and their bespoke services are being made available in showrooms worldwide. "Anyone in the know will say that it's the body that sets the tone for the quality of the motor car," says Morris. The new car is the result of a £200-million investment over the past three years. "Vickers is not selling us as a company in distress. It's selling us as a company which is already a success," he says. "We are not about providing a convenient form of transport from A to B. We are a premium brand and our competitors are other premium brands."

SILVER SERAPH
Bodywork: Assembled and painted under computer control. Hand-finished.
Engine: 5.4-litre BMW V12 programmed by R-R engineers to produce 322bhp at 5,000rpm. Five-speed automatic.
Performance: 0-60mph, 6.9 secs. 60-0mph, 3 secs. Max 140mph.
Fuel consumption: Urban 11.1mpg; extra-urban 22.1mpg; combined 16.2mpg.
Equipment: Standard: lavish. Options: unlimited.
Price: £155,000.

Shove over James, the new Seraph is a driver's car

The Silver Seraph is bad news for chauffeurs, writes Alan Copps. The first truly modern Rolls-Royce, the BMW-engined car launched next week at the Geneva Motor Show, is certain to have many an owner saying: "Move over James."

The Silver Spur that it replaces had the dynamics of a supertanker. If a corner loomed, you pointed the yards-long bonnet towards the apex and followed through with the steering wheel as the road unwound before you. There was never any problem with power, it was all a question of controlling momentum and guessing the road position of wheels hidden by long overhangs.

You can't exactly throw the Silver Seraph around, but the new shape lets you know exactly where

the wheels are. This Rolls-Royce responds to steering, accelerator and brakes in a manner that is ten times sharper than recent models. The body is 65 per cent stiffer than its predecessor and it shows, there's no hint of creaking or groaning. It is also 180kg lighter than the outgoing model and the track is wider for extra stability. Computer-controlled dampers reduce body roll and independent suspension ensures comfort.

Driving this Rolls-Royce still bears a weight of responsibility (not least because of the £155,000 price tag) but it's a much more relaxed drive, not exciting but satisfying. Driving round Oulton Park circuit near Rolls-Royce's Crewe factory, everything felt smoother and tauter. The BMW engine, though, seemed busier

People don't pay £155,000 to sit at a steering wheel, even one linked to a 5.4-litre BMW engine and a five-speed automatic ZF gearbox that will take a 2.4-ton motor car to 60mph in less than seven seconds — it can stop again in another three.

Buyers pay for the wood and the leather and Wilton carpets and the gleaming chrome for the imposing radiator grille, the famous Spirit of Ecstasy mascot and the silent ride that allows them to hear the clock ticking while they drink champagne.

Many of the craftsmen may have been retrained to meet the demands of a moving production line, but not those who cut the leather or veneer the wood. It still

Warning: sign robbers at work

Return from a shopping trip or business meeting to find an empty parking space where your vehicle should be, and understandably you might be angry and distressed. *Ray Henry writes*. But how many of us take any notice of another form of motorway crime that could have more dangerous consequences? Increasing numbers of road signs made of aluminium and other materials are being stolen for their scrap value. Even the hated cones are not immune.

The Cotswolds last year more than a dozen extra signs had to be removed after a prankster planted symbols warning of penguins, whales and dead fish, causing a dangerous distraction to drivers. As for cone-stealing, which is also reaching high proportions, many of us might wish the nation's entire stock away overnight. The police think differently. Cones are there, after all, to warn us, and replacing them eats into budgets. To counteract the problem, a number of police authorities have resorted to "cone amnesties" which have proved remarkably successful. Following the disappearance of more than 100 plastic cones, West Midlands police declared an amnesty and within a month their stock had been replenished.

Posting as maintenance workers, one gang managed to grab £30,000 worth of signs in a single night. Authorities are increasingly switching to plastic or steel signs, which have a lower scrap value, and using other deterrents such as anti-vandal or tamper-proof fixings. "Just about anything appears to be up for grabs," says the AA. "Not just the signs themselves but the guttering on the motorways and chevrons that guide drivers on dangerous bends. It's obviously dangerous, and often no one realises what has happened until there is an accident or near-accident."

But David Morgan, whose Oxfordshire-based company is Britain's biggest producer of cones, has a theory on who the worst offenders are. "The number of cones stolen every year is rising by between 3 and 4 per cent. But most are taken by the police: if one force doesn't have enough, they'll nick some from another force," he says.



In an unlikely twist to the tale, in



Susan Pentney of Gloucestershire Highways Department with "rogue" road signs erected by a prankster to confuse motorists

ARTOFAX by David Long and Les Geare

ETHERE BRANT, HENRY FORD, LOUIS DELAGE AND GM FOUNDER BILLY DURANT ALL DIED IN 1947...

DRIVING A 4.5 LITRE V12 AT SILVERSTONE IN 1951, FRONLAN GONZALES WON FERRARI'S FIRST WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP GRAND PRIX.

UNDER PRESIDENT EISENHOWER ONE IN EVERY FIVE MILES OF US FREEWAY HAD TO BE STRAIGHT ENOUGH TO DOUBLE AS AN EMERGENCY MILITARY AIRSTRIP

JAPAN'S LONGEST TRAFFIC JAM STRETCHED 154 KM FROM TOKYO TO KOBE.

COMPANY CAR COMPETITION

THE TIMES Lease Plan Company Car Driver 1998

THERE ARE still three weeks left to enter our exciting contest to find Britain's best company car driver of 1998 and win a trip to the Italian Grand Prix. The competition, sponsored by Lease Plan in partnership with Nissan, Drive Tech and Silverstone, tests the attitude, skill and knowledge of drivers. There are heats around the country and the final is held at Silverstone in June. Full rules and an entry form will appear in Go next week or can be obtained from Lease Plan on 01753 797284.

SIMPLY THE BEST DEALS!

THE TIMES

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INVESTMENT LIST

Main table containing unit trust prices, organized by fund name, price, and other financial metrics. Includes columns for fund name, price, and various performance indicators.

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B&B TIME AGAIN 63

A timely reminder on minimising CGT liabilities

WEEKEND MONEY

L&G GOES IRISH 53

Spicing up your Peps across the Irish Sea



Gavin Lumsden gives hope — and a warning — to 'unconventional' borrowers rejected by big lenders

Mortgages for part-time workers

Getting a mortgage if you are self-employed or have a poor credit history has never been easier. A new wave of specialist, mainly American, lenders are forcing banks and building societies to relax the strict criteria which they have used previously to exclude "unconventional" borrowers.

Exotically named outfits such as the Kensington Mortgage Company, Preferred Mortgage, Southern Pacific Money Store and Future Mortgages make it their mission to lend to people who have been rejected by conventional high street lenders.

These companies will consider advancing you money even if you find it difficult proving your income, either because you are self-employed but do not have a full set of accounts or because you hold several part-time jobs.

If you have had financial problems in the past and fell into arrears with another lender or have outstanding county court judgments (CCJs) against you, these lenders will offer a sympathetic ear.

However, take care. Borrowing away from the high street can be very expensive. Most companies link their interest rates to Libor, the rate at which banks borrow from each other, and then add a margin of between 3 and 6 per cent. Libor is currently 7.7 per cent. This means you could find yourself paying up to 14 per cent interest, which is more than 5 per cent above the standard variable rate of banks and building societies.

In spite of a clampdown by the Office of Fair Trading on extortionate lending there are still plenty of rogue companies to trap the unwary who charge even higher interest rates. Mortgage lending is still unregulated and if things go wrong the only way to escape from an expensive loan may be by taking

equally expensive legal action. Last year the Office of Fair Trading banned mortgage lenders from levying exorbitant redemption penalties and punitive interest rates. The new guidelines order lenders to ensure that borrowers not only understand all the details of their loans, but that they can afford them too.

However, this added protection leaves one huge pitfall for credit-impaired and self-employed borrowers: brokers. Specialist lenders will pay brokers anything from £350 to £1,500 for placing a loan with borrowers. On top of this they allow brokers to charge borrowers a fee which is deducted from the loan. Brokers will often take 3 per cent of the loan in fees. In other words, if you apply for a £100,000 mortgage you will only get £97,000 advanced to you. However, some lenders allow brokers to take up to 20 per cent in fees, which would leave you with just £80,000.

'Always ask the broker how much he is taking from your loan and if it's a lot walk away'

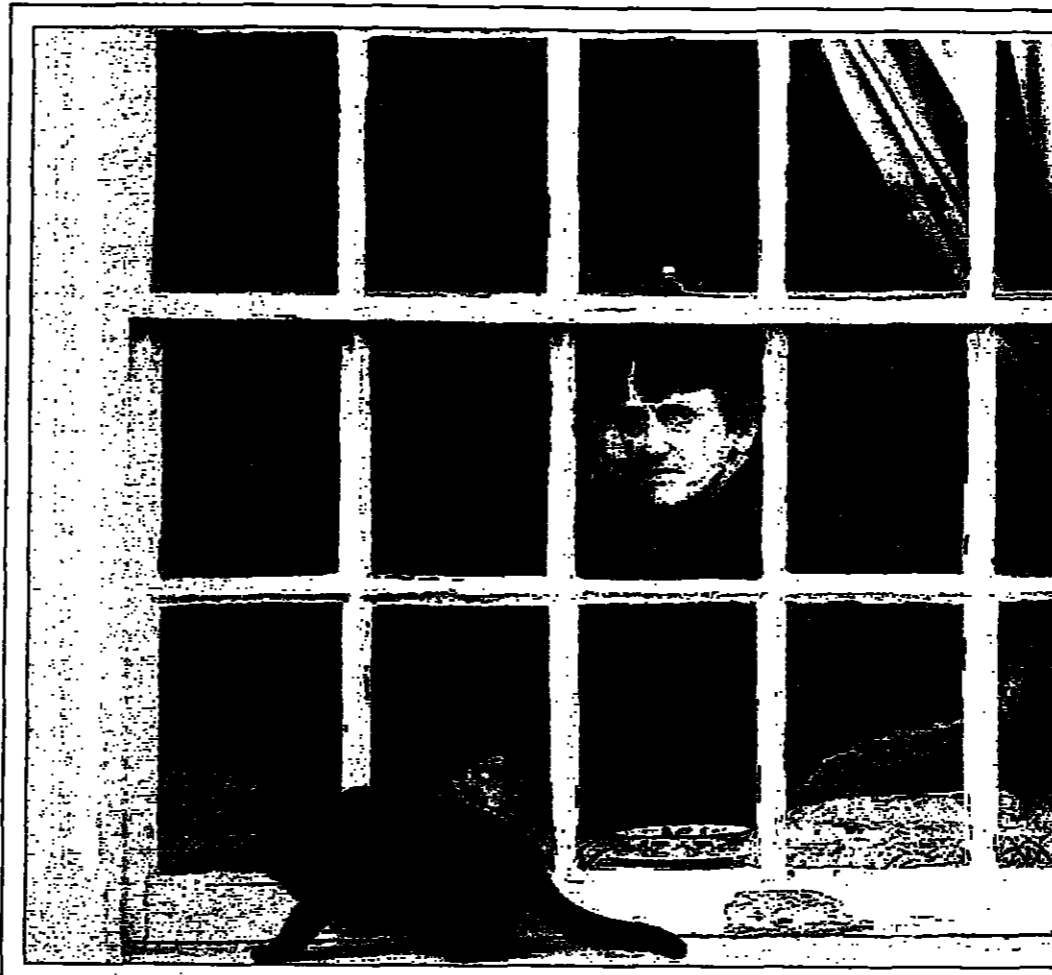
Always insist that the broker tells you how much he is taking from the loan. If it is a lot, walk away.

If you deal with a broker, make sure you understand whether you are taking out a traditional repayment mortgage or one that only pays the interest.

The danger of an expensive interest-only mortgage is that you may not then have enough extra cash to put into a Pep or endowment to pay off the capital you have borrowed.

Many specialist lenders levy extra charges such as application fees of £100 and arrangement fees of £295. Another £295 for legal expenses, more than you would spend in the high street, is not uncommon. Check what the redemption penalties will be should you decide later that you can pay off the loan early.

Although the OFT has narrowed the gap between the specialists and



the high street lenders, there are companies that will charge six months of payments before they let you go. What will happen if you fall behind with payments?

Lenders can no longer impose vastly higher rates of interest on borrowers who fall into arrears — the American-owned City Mortgage Corporation has been forced to reduce the difference between its so-called "concessionary" and standard rates from 8 per cent to 2.5 per cent. However, many lenders will still charge a monthly fee of around £48 if you fall behind.

Because of these extra expenses

Patrick Bunton of London & Country, an independent mortgage adviser, recommends that borrowers always try high street lenders first, particularly as they have begun to take a more flexible approach recently.

He says banks and building societies have reduced the bad debts they incurred in the 1989-92 property crash. The continuing recovery of house prices and the outlook for long-term low-interest rates has made them more comfortable with dealing with a borrower on his or her merits.

"In the past lenders wanted every

crossed and I doted before they lent you money. Now, if you fit 90 per cent of their criteria, they will proceed with the loan. Lenders such as Halifax, Nationwide, Abbey National, Cheltenham & Gloucester, Bristol & West and National Counties are more willing to stretch the amount you can borrow if they like you.

"If you are self-employed they may ask for two years' of accounts rather than three. If you are borrowing smaller amounts, up to 75 per cent of the value of property, they may simply accept your tax returns. If you have a CCJ they will

How ex-bankrupts face a life penalty

Divorce and financial problems are so often wedded together. In Paul Kimpton's case it was the banks and building societies who decided to play the role of vicar (Gavin Lumsden writes).

Six years ago they pulled the plug on his home restoration business, which had been struggling under the strain of soaring interest rates and plummeting property prices, just as he was getting over an expensive settlement with his ex-wife. By October that year he was bankrupt.

"They were no more helpful four years later. By now Mr Kimpton, 51, had been discharged from his bankruptcy and was getting back on his feet. His brother wanted to help him to buy a house and lent him £20,000. Mr Kimpton had his eye on a £63,000 property in Bury St Edmunds. But could he get a mortgage?

"I just had to say the word bankruptcy and they were not interested. It was very frustrating," he said.

A friend in Norwich introduced him to a broker who arranged a self-certified loan of £37,000 with

the Kensington Mortgage Company. Self-certified mortgages are mainly aimed at the self-employed who have difficulty proving their income. Mr Kimpton was wary at first, partly because the broker wanted £425 up front for arrangement and valuation fees. The interest rate was set at 3 per cent over Libor (ie. 10.7 per cent at today's rates). "However, it was there or nothing, so I thought I had to trust someone. To date they have been very helpful."

Mr Kimpton has an interest-only mortgage which costs £362 a month, on top of which he pays £69 into a Commercial Union endowment to pay off the loan in 25 years' time.

Mr Kimpton hopes to negotiate Kensington's rate down once he has been with them a few years. But for now he is content using his entrepreneurial skills to make a living.

He is currently restoring old prams for Harrods. However, his real ambition is to go into business constructing helium hot air balloons. He hopes to get a contract to decorate the Millennium Dome with them.

still lend to you provided the judgment is more than a year old and you have paid off the debt. However, the big no-nos are unsatisfied CCJs and arrears with a previous lender."

So what do you do if you are forced to get a mortgage away from the high street? It is a jungle out there, so ask friends and family whom they have used, says Danny Mahon, general manager of Equity Mortgage Services in the Wirral. "Far too many people want to rush ahead and do not check the offer they have received with a solicitor."

Take a tip from the specialists as well. Tim Keast, managing director

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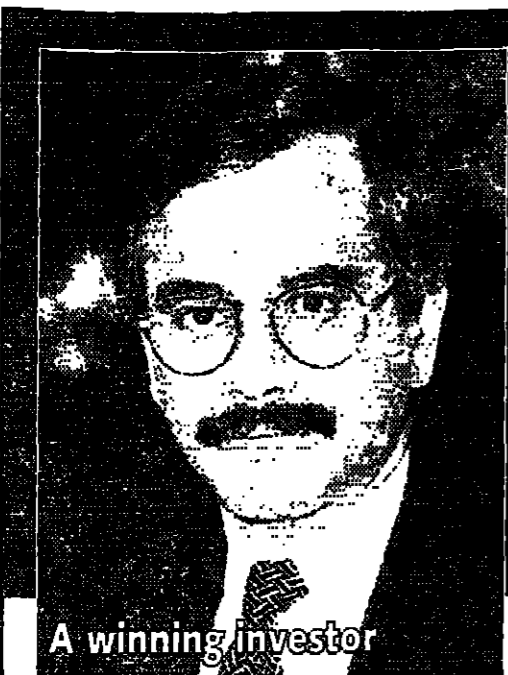
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Banking's blundering twins

The FTSE 100 index has roared out of the mid-winter doldrums. Already, the blue-chip average is 9 per cent above its August peak, suggesting that bears were wrong and that the cautious need not have worried. Again, however, the charge has again been led by relatively few big banking, insurance and pharmaceutical names. And the urge to merge dominates the surge. In banking, the giants are floundering.



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

Barclays and NatWest have seen the success of Lloyds, the smaller rival that overtook them, and Midland join HSBC, a world force suffering a bout of Asian flu. The twins took the high road, to be great powers that combine business finance, investment banking and retail services. But they lacked the will or the skill to carry it through.

Lloyds took the low road. It focused on domestic retail banking, slashed costs, took a hard line on small business in recession and protected its profits. Then it bought in new business by taking over Cheltenham & Gloucester and TSB, repeating the process of cost-cutting and weeding out poor returns. The strategy was decided a dozen years ago and the process seen through by one experienced, determined leader.

Much the same is true of Abbey National, which pioneered conversion from building society to bank years before the rest cottoned on. On Thursday, however, a sign of weakness appeared. Abbey's share of the mortgage market fell last year, when building societies still on the way to

conversion carried special attractions for consumers. More worryingly, its net interest rate margin was squeezed from 2.12 per cent to 2 per cent.

Until now, UK retail banking has managed to be more competitive than most countries, and yet earn higher returns, now bolstered by steady economic growth and the hope of more ahead. The market for financial services should grow strongly as welfare benefits are axed or whittled away. Banks may become what supermarkets were to the 1980s. As we found on the high street, that does not mean all will prosper.

Abbey shares still sell at a demanding 18 times earnings. Others have higher ratings. Northern Rock, Alliance & Leicester and Woolwich have momentum from conversion and are bound to feature on speculators' bid lists. Abbey thinks acquisition prices too high.

More ambitious mergers are no longer simple. NatWest talked vainly

with Abbey and the Prudential, but found it would be the junior partner. Barclays has been rebuffed by Standard Chartered and by NatWest, on the sensible ground that the authorities would not allow them to merge.

With Halifax passing NatWest and catching Barclays, neither of these great banks is well-placed to take a lead. The axeing of BZW was so badly handled that it cost shareholders a fortune. At least it was the last big retreat from old ambitions by a relatively new top man.

At NatWest, a £700 million exit from share markets, expensive withdrawal from US retail banking and a backlog of costs to cut, mark the failure of strategy developed by Lord Alexander of Wealden, the present chairman, and Derek Wanless, his chief executive. They bought a corporate finance business, failed to integrate it and gave it away in good measure to management. A US bond acquisition looks stranded.

The top team's reaction to the collapse of their strategy has been to fire two non-executive directors who criticised it. Lord Alexander and Mr Wanless should go immediately. If the discredited duo remain, however, it will have one advantage. In NatWest's situation, it may be best to have no strategy. Just clear up and wait for the bid. One suspects though that Barclays aims, and NatWest hopes, to follow in the steps of Lloyds. A strategy thought out long ago and pursued steadily when others had their eyes elsewhere is not one to copy in a hurry now.

Is self-assessment a fiasco or triumph? Susan Emmett reports

Accountants blamed for late tax forms



Fed up: Jon Whittick, an accountant, who claimed no one was given enough time, "and it's costing us all money"

Apathetic Britons lose out
More than 36 million people will give away £6.9 billion to the Exchequer this year in unnecessary taxation because of lack of understanding of the tax system or just plain laziness.

An investigation by TaxAction, conducted by Independent Financial Adviser Promotion, shows that the average British taxpayer has thrown away £189 by failing to take action on a number of fronts.

The Chancellor will receive an extra £1.47 billion through self-assessment because of fines and taxpayers paying the wrong amount, and up to £1.097 billion was wasted on inheritance tax paid because the public did not plan ahead.

Britons are still failing to make full use of tax shelters such as Tessas and Peps.

Ann-Marie Martyn, chief executive of Independent Financial Adviser Promotion, said: "The amount of tax Britons waste continues to astound me. Much of the waste is through simple apathy on the part of taxpayers. Most people would be richer simply by arranging their finances better."

Hundreds of thousands of taxpayers received a £100 fine from the Inland Revenue this week for failing to meet the January 31 deadline for self-assessment. But there were not as many fines as had been expected.

The Revenue posted 670,000 penalty notices, having calculated earlier this month that 900,000 including 810,000 individual taxpayers, had missed the deadline.

Accountants fear a flood of complaints from disgruntled taxpayers because the bulk of the notices have been sent to people represented by accountants.

The Revenue said that most taxpayers who did not have accountants to help them had filed their returns by September 30, the deadline for those who decided to ask the Revenue to calculate their bill for them.

Clients are expected to put pressure on the accountancy firms to pay the £100 fine. John Waterhouse, a partner at Price Waterhouse, said: "You can't get away from the fact that the system has penalised 670,000 people. Something has gone wrong. Fundamentally, all is not well."

"I know some clients are going to blame their accountants and have arguments over who is going to pay the fine."

One accountancy firm, Tax Link, the Exeter-based self-assessment tax calculation specialists, has already promised to pay the £100 fine for new clients.

Paul Harmsworth, the managing director of Tax Link, said: "The Inland Revenue's inflexible attitude will

inflict financial suffering on large numbers of people including hard-working self-employed business people, many of whom have quite simply not had the time to sit down and work through a complex 12-page form and separate schedule."

However, the Revenue said there was little evidence that taxpayers found the forms difficult and added that returns were far more accurate than forecast. Just 26 per cent needed minor corrections and fewer than 10 per cent had to be sent back.

Doug Smith, director of self-assessment for the Inland Revenue, said he did not understand what all the "bleating" was about. "It's no different from paying a fine to get your car unclamped, don't you think?"

Jon Whittick, a small local accountant in Winchester disagrees and believes the central office of the Inland Revenue is out of touch with grassroots feelings.

Mr Whittick has been rallying local accountants to put pressure on the Government to admit self-assessment is not working. He is particularly angry at the number of mistakes made by the Revenue.

Despite having only 50 clients, Mr Whittick was sent seven reminder notices for forms which had been delivered on time. One particular form had been logged by the Revenue on November 19.

Mr Whittick said: "It has basically gone totally wrong this year. Nobody was given enough time accountants, their client and local revenue inspectors, and it is costing us all money. I am fed up with it. I have got 'nough to do

without sorting out the Revenue's mistakes."

Tax experts predict self-assessment is likely to become a political issue in the coming weeks as increasing numbers of people complain about the fines and interest charges.

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The Northern Rock is once more playing its favourite role: the saver's friend in the North. In this part, the bank has every solid Geordie virtue: canny, principled and blunt.

Its telephone savings arm, to be launched next month, will offer highly generous rates on its Save Direct Instant account. Those with a deposit of £5,000 will receive 7.80 per cent, better even than Safeway, the latest supermarket to move into banking. Those with £50,000 or more will enjoy a rate of 8.10 per cent which compares with the 7.85 per cent paid by the Halifax's new direct division. These rates will spur the competition to improve their returns, causing millions to thank the Northern Rock for its intervention.

Those who transfer their cash to the Northern Rock should, however, not let their vision be obscured by a fog of gratitude to the Tyneside institution. Although it may pose as one of those laconic good guys, so beloved of TV drama makers, the Northern Rock has a darker side. In the past, it has launched new accounts with best buy rates which became has-beens, when replacements came on the scene.

Northern Rock pledges that its direct division will go from strength to strength. Weekend Money, meanwhile, promises that it will be keeping a watch on Save Direct Instant to ensure that it does not suffer the fate of past Northern Rock accounts.



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

Having seen that home buyers seem reconciled to the gradual disappearance of the concession, the current Chancellor is likely to feel no embarrassment about dealing the death blow to Miras, a relic of a bygone age when all loan interest was tax deductible. He can argue that he is only following the example of his Tory predecessors, none of them quite courageous enough to withdraw the relief entirely.

News of its abolition would raise a loud Yippee in the executive suite at your mortgage lender. Miras is expensive to administer, at all rates of tax. The end of the relief would mean large cost savings. If next month's Budget includes an obituary for Miras, then you should ask your lender how it intends to pass on some of these savings to you.

Miras touch
SUCCESSIVE Chancellors have, little by little, reduced the value of mortgage interest tax relief, once seen as a major incentive to join the property-owning classes. A further cut takes effect in April, restricting the relief to the 10 per cent rate of tax, adding £10 or so a month to the average loan.

Anne Ashworth and Karen Zagor on plans to help people to break free from welfare

Family fortunes on the rise

With the Budget now less than three weeks away, the Government is finalising its plans for tax credits for low-income families. In a new development, Harriet Harman, Social Security Secretary, has agreed a deal with the Treasury to pay 75 per cent of the childcare costs of poorer households. Those with earnings of less than £20,000 are thought likely to benefit, receiving compensation for the expense of nurseries and child minders for two children.

The childcare payment will be a major feature of the tax credit system, which ministers hope will encourage the poor to break free of welfare and return to the workforce.

Tax credits, which will be the responsibility of the Inland Revenue, will replace family credit paid to households in work, administered paid by the Department of Social Security. It seems almost certain that they will reduce a household's final tax bill, once all tax liabilities have been calculated. But little else is known about how the credits will reach those in need, or how they will be calculated.

It is unclear whether the cash will be paid through wage packets, involving employers in the distribution of the money, or whether the Inland Revenue will transfer the money directly into bank and building society accounts.

There is concern that the money should go straight to the parent with primary responsibility for the children, rather than being frittered away on inessential expenditure. But Ms Harman would not be drawn on the details, telling MPs that they must wait until the Budget.

Whatever the shape of the final proposals, there can be no guarantee that they will make the workplace more attractive than a life on benefit.

Tax credit schemes have had varying degrees of success. In Canada, the Government has been fine-tuning its tax credit system since it was introduced in 1993. Further changes were unveiled in the country's budget this week.

A Canadian Government source said that the aim of the reforms would be to give the same level of cash benefits to working families as those on welfare. Under the previous arrangements, families leaving welfare were forced to sacrifice benefits. Parents on welfare receive more help with medical expenses, food, clothing and transportation costs than those in low-paid employment.

At present a family with two children would receive C\$2,040 (£850) in benefits. The tax credit system, known as the working income supplement, would increase this to C\$2,540 (£1,058). From July, the same family will receive C\$3,050 (£1,270).

The Chancellor may prefer to use the US as a role model. America's childcare credit is based on a parent's total income and the number of children in a family. Parents receive a tax credit equivalent to a percentage of child care costs of up to \$2,400 for the first child and \$4,800 for two.

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In America childcare credit is based on the parents' income and number of children

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The above graph is designed to show what happened to five identical people and how different their outcomes have become. The graph is not designed to favour one route over another - everybody's personal circumstances are different - that's why you should seek advice about the most appropriate route. Furthermore, you should appreciate that the initial levels of annuities and

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£77bn is on offer and it could be for you

Before last Wednesday's National Lottery draw the competition announcer reminded the watching millions that somebody who had bought a ticket in Luton for the January 7 draw had not yet come forward to claim the £2.1 million jackpot prize.

Unless the ticket holder is playing a waiting game, there is a fair chance the prize will remain unclaimed and be rolled over into the lottery's good causes fund after the 180-day period for winners to collect their cheques has passed — joining the billions of pounds classed as lost investments in the UK.

Unclaimed prizes from the National Lottery are relatively new, although already there is £38.6 million waiting to be collected. The biggest unclaimed amount — more than £2 million for a jackpot-winning ticket bought in Hull last May — has already been swept up by the charity fund.

Britons have been losing investments for centuries and an estimated £77 billion of funds is sitting in UK banks, building societies and investment funds waiting to be claimed. Collectively we have lost track of about £35 billion of savings and shares and another £22 billion is waiting to be claimed in insurance funds, Premium Bonds, National Lottery winnings, and pension schemes.

If you are one who has lost trace of an investment or savings account, the good news is that finding your missing money is probably easier than you think. Depending on what type of account or fund you had, here is what to do.

John Givens reports

how forgetful Britons have abandoned their life investments

from 10 to 25 per cent of the value of the stocks as a commission. Many companies will waive their charges if the search is not successful or if the recovered investment is worth very little.

PREMIUM BONDS

Premium Bond prizes can be claimed any time after the draw. The Premium Bond office holds almost 240,000 unclaimed prizes worth an estimated £13.5 million, dating back to the first draw in June 1957. Most prizes go unclaimed because the holders forget to notify National Savings when changing their name or address.

Main post offices have a full list of all unclaimed prizes since 1957. However, there are easier ways of finding out if you have won a prize. If you still have the yellow card which came with the holding, you can use it to inform National Savings of your new details. Send it to: Premium Bonds, National Savings, Lytham-St-Annes, Lancashire FY0 1YN. If the yellow card has been lost, get a form from a post office.

If a Premium Bond beneficiary has died, winnings from a draw up to a year after the date of death can be claimed by the deceased's estate at any time. After the 12-month period is past the prize is given to the next possible winner.

NATIONAL SAVINGS

With some schemes, such as Capital Bonds, National Savings automatically rolls over investments into the current



No worries for this lot: some of the 500 winners who have become millionaires through the National Lottery

issue if there is no instruction from the investor, but with many other National Savings products automatic reinvestment is not an option.

For instance, there is more than £100 million outstanding in 40 million Ordinary Accounts. If you come across a pre-1969 post office savings book or a National Savings Ordinary Account book, send it to The Ordinary Account, National Savings, Glasgow, G5 1SB.

Another £1.6 billion of British Savings Bonds remains unclaimed gathering dust not interest. If you are one of the 8,000 forgetful bond holders, write to British Savings Bonds, National Savings, Blackpool, FY3 9YP.

BUILDING SOCIETIES

Building Societies are prone to takeovers so if you have come across an old savings book from a society which does not exist you will need to find out who took over the business. Write to the Building Societies Association at 3 Savile Row, London W1X 1AF; telephone: 0171-437 0655.

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

The Association of Investment Trust Companies (AITC) will help if your fund has changed its name. Its address is Durrant House, 8-13 Chiswell Street,

London EC1Y 4YY, telephone 0171-588 5347. Likewise, the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (AUTIF) at 65 Kingsway, London WC2B 6TD, telephone 0171-831 0898.

INSURANCE POLICIES

If you have paid money into an insurance-linked product such as an investment bond or endowment, try to find the most recent address for the insurance company; consult the register of insurance companies held by the Association of British Insurers (ABI) at 51 Gresham Street, London, EC2V 7HQ; telephone 0171-600 3333.

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Newton Higher Income	1	1	3
Newton Income	1	2	1
Newton International Growth	1	1	2
Newton Japan	1	1	1
Newton (Global)	1	2	2

• The Newton Income PEP has ranked No 1 unit trust PEP over ALL unit trust PEPs since PEPs were launched*

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Small companies starting to fly back into fashion

Though personal equity plans will cease to exist in April 1999, generous tax relief for this financial year and next is still on offer through the £6,000 general PEP allowance, plus a further £3,000 that can be invested in a single company PEP.

But, with the FTSE 100 index at a record high, should investors be looking further afield for value?

Jamie Berry, the managing director of the independent financial adviser Berry Asset Management, is keen on actively managed investment trusts such as TR Property.

Allenbridge Group, meanwhile, believes that the Credit Suisse Fellowship fund, Gartmore Smaller Companies and Fidelity UK Growth should still be able to offer good growth for investors who are bullish about the British scene. It also likes the Fidelity International PEP Trust, Gartmore Selected European Opportunities and Newton European, plus Legal & General's UK index tracking fund.

Many market watchers have predicted that 1998 will be the year smaller companies catch up with their blue chip brothers, and investors appear to have taken heed.

Schroder Unit Trusts says that 70 per cent of the £11 million invested in Peps in January went into its Smaller Companies fund. Investors putting their full PEP allowance into this fund will see £2,250 put into UK smaller companies, £2,250 into European, and £1,500 into US smaller companies.

At Credit Suisse Asset Management, the ethical Fellowship fund is a big seller. The fund is biased towards smaller companies and its holdings in January included the flower delivery company Flying Flowers and the nursery education company Nord Anglia.

The UK fund includes such names as Iceland Group, Somerfield and Beresford International. The European Trust has such well-known companies as Societe Generale, Credit Suisse, Rhone Poulenc and Skandia.

Europe also figures as one of Cartmore's favoured funds, this time it is the European Selected Opportunities Fund. This PEP fund includes the giant drug company Novartis, Banco di Roma, and the oil company Total as well as Telecom Italia and the insurer Swiss RER.

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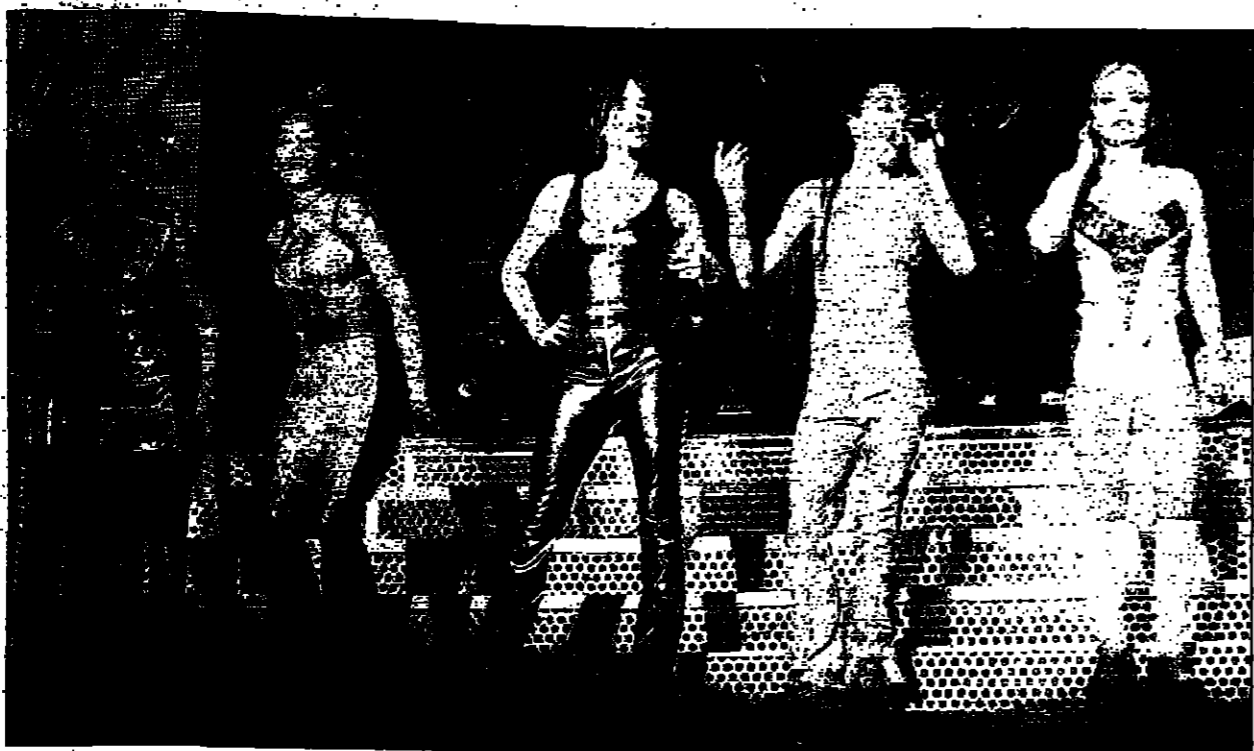
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Marianne Curphey reports the latest moves on the tax-saving front



Pepping up Dublin: the Spice Girls this week chose The Point as the opening venue of their new European tour

L&G goes Irish to spice up Peps

Legal & General is hoping to capitalise on last-minute demand for personal equity plans by launching a new Dublin-based Pep which can be used for both single-company and general Peps. The life insurer expects strong demand for both types of Pep in the two years before the individual savings account (isa) arrives.

Under the current regulations, investors can put a total of £9,000 each year into Peps — £6,000 into a general Pep and £3,000 into a single-company Pep. However, since single-company Peps invest in the stock of a single company many investors avoid them because they believe them to be too risky. They prefer their portfolio to be more diversified.

According to the Inland Revenue, between 1992 and 1997 about 8.7 million general Pep plans were taken out, compared with only 1.2 million single-company plans. This means that more than 70 per cent of existing investors are failing to use their total Pep allowances each year.

Some fund managers have found a way round this. British regulations ban investors from putting the shares of unit or investment trusts in a single-company Pep because they are collective investments. However, by listing their Peps as a company in Dublin, HSBC and Legal & General have been able to sidestep the rules. Both products from their fund managers qualify for single-company status under Revenue rules.

Legal & General's new Pep will be launched on Monday and will take

business until April 9. It is based on European investments and is linked to the four biggest indices there. Of the whole portfolio, 30 per cent will be invested in the UK's FTSE 100; 25 per cent in France's CAC; 25 per cent in Germany's DAX; and 20 per cent in Switzerland's SMI index. To gain the maximum benefit, investors have to leave their money in for six years, after which time they will get back up to 140 per cent of the rise in those indices. If the markets have not risen, they will get back their original capital.

This is similar to the HSBC Global Protection Pep, which is based on investing in equal proportions in the indices of the UK, US, Europe and Japan. If after five-and-a-half years all these markets have fallen, you only get back the money you first invested. Unlike Legal & General's Dublin-based Pep, the HSBC Pep will give you all the growth over the five-and-a-half-year period and is not capped. This product is available until April 30, 1998.

Alistair Fraser, HSBC Asset Management's business development manager, said it was possible for investors to put up to £18,000 over this tax year and next because the product fitted the requirements for both general and single-company Peps.

Graham Hooper, investment manager with the independent financial adviser Chase de Vere, said he liked the Dublin-based funds because they allowed clients to diversify their holdings and because he

is bullish about Europe. "Once this country is part of EMU the risk of investing in Europe will be reduced because the danger of adverse currency movements will have been removed," he said.

"In addition, it allows you to take advantage of growth in markets in which the UK has no part. For example, we no longer have any carmakers and yet companies like BMW have been doing very well. If you had exposure to Europe you would benefit from those gains."

He also likes managed single-company Peps from the likes of Henderson, Fidelity and HSBC. These companies use their research to pick a single company whose shares they believe will do well. They buy these shares within your Pep, and when they believe it is time to take profits they switch into another stock. He said: "Our research shows that although many people monitor their investors they rarely sell their shares. These types of Peps make the decision for you when the shares look like they have reached the end of a good run."

There are also self-select single-company Peps for people who are experienced enough to pick their own shares but want a Pep wrapper to shield the investment from capital gains tax liabilities and income tax which would otherwise be payable at their highest rate on dividends.

Among the stockbrokers which offer the cheapest self-select Peps are Killick and Co, which has a head office in London, and Pilling & Co in Manchester.

Bed and breakfasting, page 63



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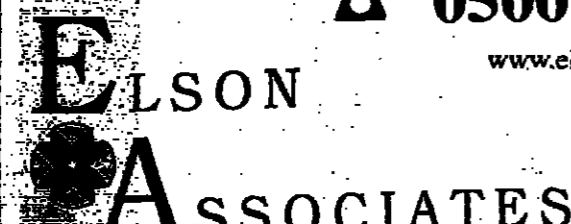

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Time your windfall is given a pep up

If you were a lucky winner in the great windfall shares handout last year, and put the shares in a personal equity plan (PeP), it is worth checking up on them.

Last year a number of PeP managers opened the doors to new shareholders, offering to provide the tax shelter of a PeP wrapper, free of charge.

Virgin Direct, for example, offered to hold windfall shares in a PeP for a year. With the anniversary of the first building society float approaching - Alliance & Leicester came to the market last April - Virgin Direct will soon be writing to investors who placed windfall shares in a Virgin PeP.

After the shares have been held for a year, they are due to be sold automatically and the proceeds reinvested in either the Virgin Growth or Income PeP.

Shareholders can opt to sell them at an earlier date before the year is up, or they can choose to sell and withdraw the cash, paying stamp duty at 0.5 per cent on the proceeds. They will not be able to withdraw the shares and continue to hold them separately.

Anyone who put windfall shares in a Fidelity PeP has until next year. The company has said that there will be no charge until April 5, 1999, and if a shareholder makes an investment in Fidelity before that date, the shares will continue to be held free of charge. Otherwise there will be an annual charge of £15 per shareholding.

Save & Prosper offered windfall shareholders free entry to a PeP until April 5, 1999, after which a £10 annual holding charge will be levied irrespective of the number of different windfall shares that are held.

Perpetual offered a free transfer to a PeP for windfall shares up until 1999, after which normal PeP charges will apply. Shareholders have also been offered a free switch into unit trusts within the two-year period.

M&G charges £8 a year per set of windfall shares, as opposed to its normal management fee for its PePs. The annual charge is for an indefinite period, and the group said around 95 per cent of its clients had left their windfall shares untouched.

Despite the returns seen on the shares to date, fund managers in general are keen to persuade windfall shareholders of the benefits of spreading their risks, through investment in a more broadly based fund.

David Mossop, the chief executive of Perpetual, said: 'Our general advice is that unit trust investment offers a broader spread. Windfall shareholders have held on to their shares in the main, but I think we need to get past the end of the tax year to see what people intend to do.'

Clare Stewart warns investors who took advantage of free offers to check the small print on their contracts.

With the bank reporting season well under way, the building societies turned banks have been in the spotlight and windfall shareholders who have held on to their shares will have seen some strong share price rises.

Shares in Woolwich were boosted to their highest level since flotation, peaking at 395 1/2 p, after it delivered better than expected year-end profits and the promise of a special dividend payment which is worth an average of £105 to each shareholder.

On top of this, Woolwich's announcement that it will seek permission to buy back shares provided further cheer for shareholders.

The share price has since eased back to around 380p, just up from its original

flotation price of 370p. Speculation that the Woolwich is a possible takeover target may help to add some interest to its share price, but recently a fair number of sell recommendations have been published by analysts.

Given the performance and the growth prospects, the group's current valuation is difficult to justify, many of the analysts say.

Alliance & Leicester, which yesterday reported year-end results, has seen its shares climb over the past few weeks helped by takeover talk.

Alliance shares were given a further boost yesterday on the news of the group's strong profits growth. At the pre-tax level profits rose 29 per cent to £395 million, ahead of some City forecasts. The dividend payout of 20.8p for the year helped to push the shares to a new high point, over 900p.

The Halifax is due to weigh in with its end-of-year figures next Tuesday. It too, in line with the sector, has enjoyed a good run and its shares have moved up this week to record levels, above 500p.

Profits of £1.6 billion are expected from the mortgage giant, with a dividend of 18.7p.

The Halifax has already made provision for its conversion costs, so much of the focus will be on what plans the bank has for its cash mountain which is currently £4 billion.

Speculation about a possible acquisition and hopes of a special dividend payment to shareholders are expected to keep the share price bubbling in the run-up to the results.

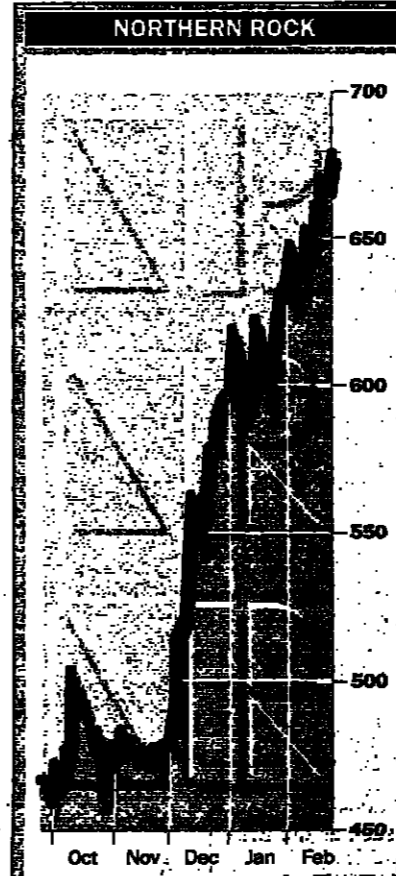
Shares in Abbey National, which pioneered the stock market route, have also been in demand, rising to £13.20. The group reported year end figures on Thursday, but pre-tax profits came in below City forecasts at £1.27 billion, and as a result its shares fell sharply - before recovering some ground to around 1250p.

The Norwich Union, which floated at 290p, and where members were able to subscribe for additional shares at a discounted price of 265p, has made impressive progress since joining the stock market last June.

This week its shares moved over the £5 level and analysts at NatWest Markets are forecasting a rise in 1997 pre-tax profits from £567 million to £650 million. Results are due from Norwich Union on March 10.

Share prices in the banking sector have been at the forefront of recent stock market rises, despite more cautious noises being made by analysts who give warning that some shares have risen beyond justifiable levels.

Some small shareholders, including windfall beneficiaries, may well be tempted to sell and take the profits, and dividends, currently on offer for them.



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Partial view of another advertisement on the right edge of the page, mentioning 'Taking a chair to the Sky' and 'Pe'.

Handwritten note at the bottom center: 50 كذا من الاجل

Taking a bit of a chance at the Skipton

A best-of-both-worlds bond may not be as good as it seems, says Susie Pine-Coffin



Banks and building societies are conscious that some of their savers may want to be a little more adventurous. They want to dip a toe into the stock market but without running too big a risk with their cash.

Anxious not to lose these customers, banks and building societies are now selling a range of bonds that combine stock market investment with a guarantee. But these bonds may not necessarily represent the best of both worlds.

One of the latest schemes comes from Skipton Building Society. Its FTSE Growth Bond offers up to 60 per cent of the growth of the index, and guaranteed return of capital. The bond matures on September 30, 2003. Minimum investment is £5,000 and the maximum is £1 million.

The advantage of this type of investment is that the initial investment is guaranteed, so whatever happens to the value of shares during the next five and a half years investors will get their money back.

However, opinions are divided as to whether the FTSE index can continue to break records in the future.

Alan Scott, sales and marketing director of Skipton Building Society, conceded that the bonds were "more suitable for a cautious investor rather than someone who wants to speculate."

At that rate, investors in the Skipton FTSE Growth Bond who invested £5,000 could expect to see a return of £8,000 after five and a half years because Skipton is offering to pay 6 per cent for every 1 per cent increase in the Footsie's value up to a maximum growth potential of 60 per cent.

Although this sounds very attractive, Richard Hunter, of Holden Meekins, the financial adviser, sounds a note of caution. Historically over the past five years, the FTSE has

risen in value by 157.4 per cent. "At that rate of return, someone putting £5,000 into the FTSE could expect to see a return of approximately £13,000 after five and half years. The Skipton scheme is capped so you cannot get more than a maximum return of 60 per cent, or £8,000."

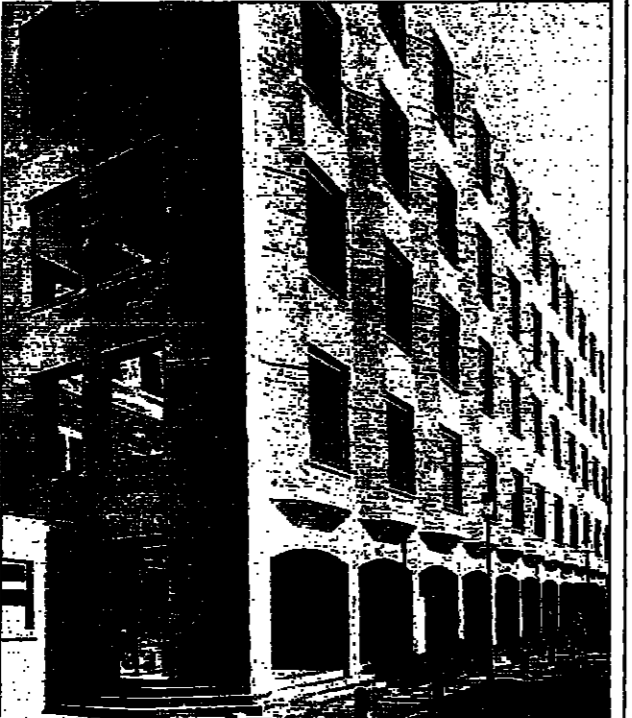
Mr Hunter continued: "We think the Skipton bond is a way of betting that the Footsie does not perform as well in the future as it has done during the past five years. This type of scheme combined with say a £5,000 investment in a FTSE tracker fund would be a way to hedge your bets against the market tumbling."

Mark Bolland, technical director of Chamberlain de Broe, the financial adviser, is also sceptical. He said: "While I don't want to unfairly criticise this type of scheme, I do have two major reservations about it. The first is that five and a half years is a long time to lock up your money, especially when it does not allow for any flexibility."

"The second is that if the market goes horribly wrong, the investor does not get any financial return at all. So for the cautious investor who needed the guarantee of not losing their investment, they would have been better off leaving their money in a deposit account. Doing this, based at a compound interest rate of a conservative 5 per cent, an investor putting in £5,000 would, over five and a half years, earn at least £1,500 on their investment."

"For someone who cannot afford to take any risk at all, he or she should look at one of the guaranteed minimum return Tesas (Tax Exempt Special Savings Account) being offered by other financial institutions, such as the Bristol & West and HSBC."

Score: ★★ Products graded from ★ (good), to ★★★★★ (outstanding).



A view of the Skipton: investors need a good view of its bond

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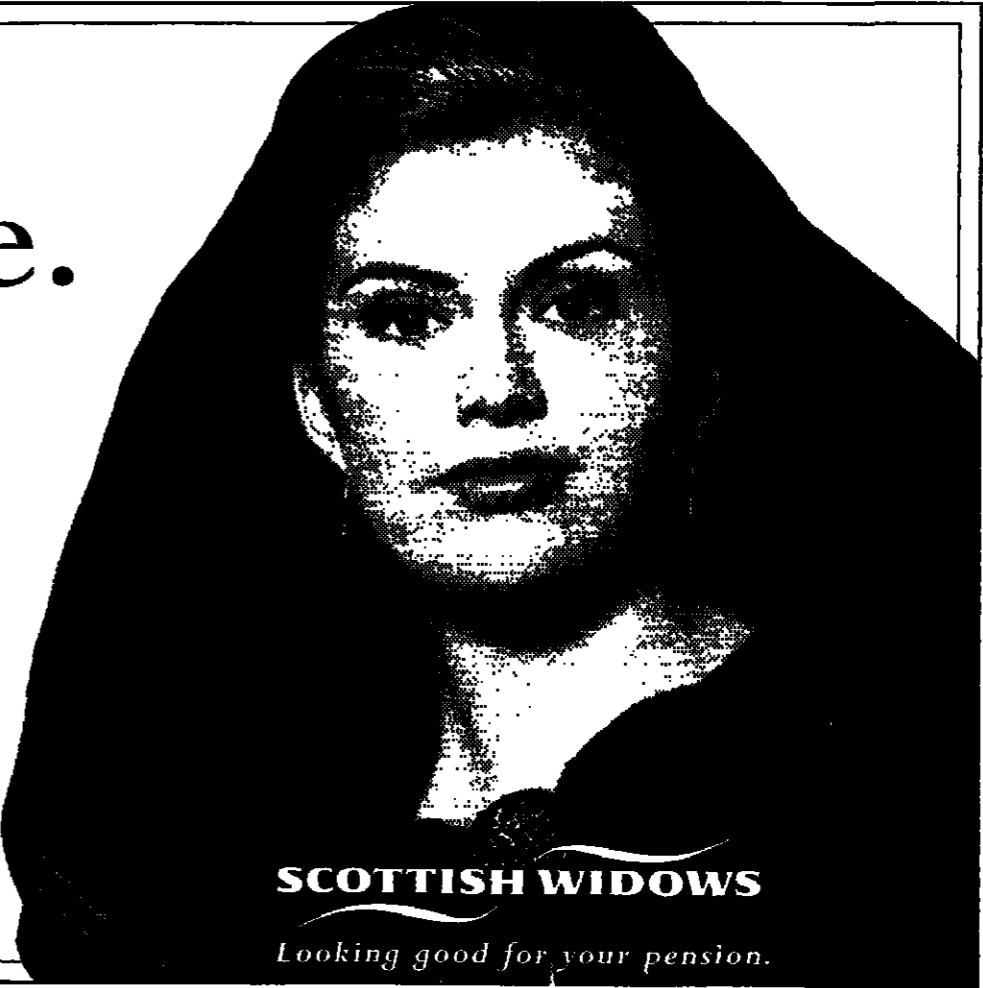


*Subject to Government regulation. *Source: Mifpr/LGIM, on an offer to bid basis based on all PEP charges with gross income re-invested from 01.11.95 (Legal & General since launch) to 03.02.98. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. From 06.04.99 tax credits will no longer be able to be reclaimed by PEPs investing in equity based unit trusts. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. All comparisons of cost apply to PEPs investing wholly in unit trusts. Full written details are available on request. All statements are correct as at 05.02.98. The Government published a consultative document in December 1997 on proposals for Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) to be launched in April 1999. The terms and limits for converting an existing PEP into an ISA are being considered as part of the consultation. Legal & General (Direct) Limited, Registered in England No. 270380, Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TP. Representative only of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and DMO for the purposes of recommending, advising on and selling life insurance and investment products bearing Legal & General's name.

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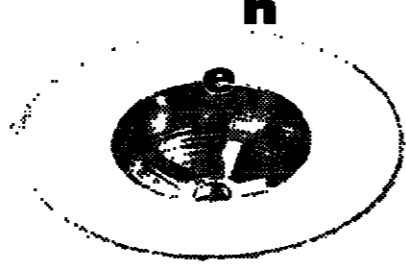


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Patrick Collinson reports on the latest from the savings war while

Thanks to the taxman, the interest on your savings could be going down



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National Savings is suffering from the onslaught of high-interest supermarket and direct bank accounts, with financial advisers giving warning that savings rates have slipped far behind the new entrants.

Amanda Davidson, a partner at Holden Meehan, a financial adviser, said: "National Savings rates are not as good as they used to be and you can certainly do better. The rates have slipped behind and they don't seem to be keeping up with the newer, more aggressive, players in the savings market."

Billions of pounds is pouring into the new-style accounts on offer from providers such as Safeway or Standard Life Bank. Standard Life alone has picked up £215 million since opening its account on January 5.

Meanwhile, sales of National Savings products are down by a third since their peak in early 1996. But this week National Savings hit back. It is telling savers not to be seduced by the headline-grabbing high interest rates on offer from the new entrants, which it says are unlikely to be sustained in the long run.

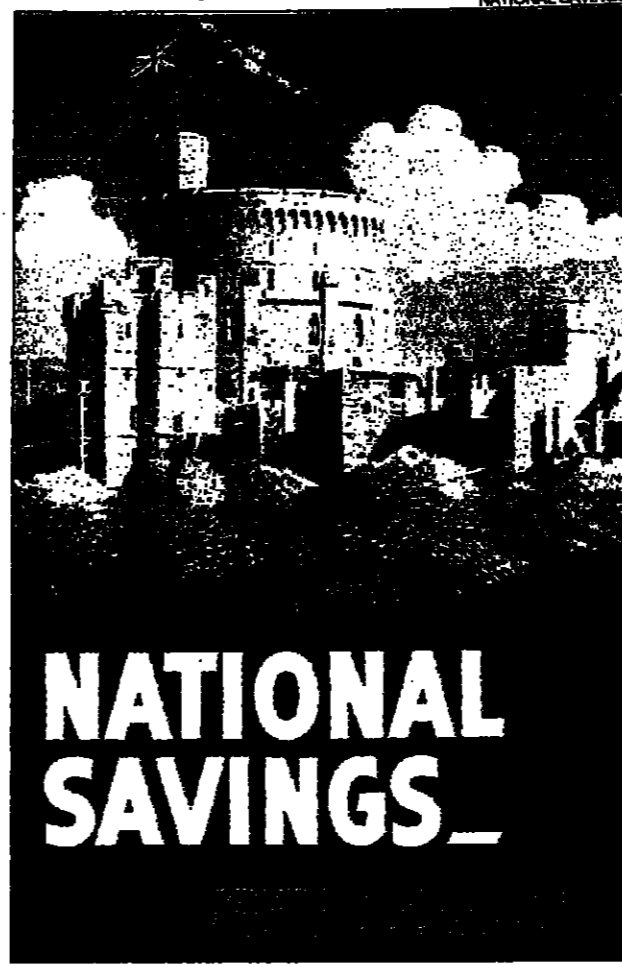
Chris Don, a National Savings spokesman, said: "It's all very well to offer a rate of 7.5 or 8 per cent, but how long are they going to keep it there? Some companies are offering very attractive rates initially, but will those rates still be so competitive in six months, one year or three years? I suspect the answer is no."

But Standard Life Bank says National Savings' comments are unwarranted. Jim Spowart, managing director, said: "These are not loss-leader rates: we are making a healthy margin even when paying such a high rate. We cannot say that we will always be the very best rate, but we are always going to be very competitive."

Last week National Savings issued statistics showing that its investment account and income bonds compare well against leading providers such as Abbey National and Halifax. But what the figures underline is that the big providers are finding it equally as difficult to compete against the new entrants as National Savings is.

Ms Davidson said: "I saw a client last week who was only getting 3.8 per cent on his savings at Abbey National. All I had to do to nearly double that income was to give them a Standard Life Bank application form." Halifax has responded with rates of up to 7.85 per cent — but only for large sums. To qualify,

'Do not be seduced by high rates'



National Savings wants investors to stay for the long term.

one must save a minimum of £10,000. On a £1,000 deposit in a Liquid Gold account, Halifax pays only 4 per cent gross.

Mr Spowart said: "You are seeing something similar to what happened in the 1960s and 1970s, when banks lost savers to building societies. It is they who are now going to take a pounding from the likes of us and supermarkets."

The good news for savers is that building societies are now under far more pressure to respond to changes in rates. The building societies have been masters at raising mortgage rates immediately after a rise in bank base rate, while leaving rates paid to savers trailing.

Roddy Kohn, of Kohn Cougar, a financial adviser, said: "In the past, the societies have unfairly denied savers better rates when they have raised

mortgage rates. Now they are going to be forced by the supermarkets to move savings rates up much more rapidly."

National Savings looks after more than £60 billion of savers' money, and ran into a barrage of criticism when it cut its rates on a range of savings vehicles in mid-January.

It cut Pensioner Bonds by 0.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent, Children's Bonus Bonds by 0.5 per cent to 6.25 per cent and Fixed Interest Savings Certificates by 0.35 per cent to 5 per cent. However, it raised rates on its one-month notice Investment Account by 0.5 per cent and increased its Income Bond rate by 0.25 per cent.

struggling to compete against other providers. The National Savings Investment Account pays interest of only 4.75 per cent on balances up to £500, compared with 6.96 per cent at Standard Life Bank. On a balance of £1,000 it pays 5.25 per cent, while Safeway pays 7.3 per cent.

For savers who have more to put aside and who do not need instant access to their money, the National Savings Income Bond is paying a gross rate of 7 per cent, rising to 7.25 per cent for sums over £25,000. But Scarborough Building Society is offering a rate of 7.6 per cent on £1,000, while Bristol & West is paying 7.8 per cent on balances over £10,000.

Both Scarborough and Bristol & West insist that their rates will remain competitive and that they will not short-change savers with much lower rates once the money has come through the door.

Martin Broomfield, Bristol & West savings manager, said: "The market is highly competitive and we will pay rates accordingly. We are not in the business of whipping in and out of the market." John Carrier, the Scarborough chief executive, said: "We have demonstrated regularly our commitment to paying a highly competitive rate and there is no reason why we should not do so in future."

Savers may also note that the Scarborough account confers membership rights, and would therefore qualify for a payout on demutualisation. But Mr Carrier is adamant that the society will remain mutual.

National Savings is also fighting a separate battle with its savers to explain why it is paying better interest rates on money placed with it for the short term and less on money locked away for five years. For example, it pays only 5 per cent on its five-year Savings Certificates, but 7 per cent on 90-day Income Bonds.

The technical answer is that short-term savers are benefitting from the "inverse yield curve". What this means is that money market players expect base rates to fall significantly over the next five years, for reasons such as a possible entry of sterling into a single European currency.

The Bank of England base rate is relatively high at the moment while it fights off short-term inflationary pressures, but no saving institution is willing to guarantee to pay that level of interest over the longer term as rates begin to head downhill. Therefore short-term rates are higher than long-term rates.

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صكذ من الاجل

John Givens looks at the risks and rewards of investing in with-profits bonds

Reap rewards with protection

In the turbulent world of rising and falling equity markets, it is easy to see why investors trying to avoid a rollercoaster ride with their cash would choose to opt for with-profits bonds.

Although they will never receive the same amount of attention as higher-profile investments such as unit trusts, investment trusts or the tax-efficient Tessa and Peps — both soon to be replaced by the already infamous individual savings account — with-profits bonds are a useful way for savers to protect their cash and take a tax-free income at the same time.

The bonds are sold by insurance companies and offer investors the chance to take a tax-free annual income of up to 5 per cent of the purchase value of the investment, as well as the potential for capital growth.

With-profits bonds can invest in a mixture of equities, gilts and property and more than 20 top insurance companies offer the product, with minimum investment levels starting from £1,000 and rising to £10,000.

Each year the insurance company controlling your cash will declare a bonus to be applied to the bond which is directly linked to how well the fund has performed over the 12-month period, although at times when the investment has done particularly well the issuer might decide to retain some of the profits to hand out when things are not going as well.

These bonuses are averaging about 7.75 per cent at the moment, depending on which insurance company is supplying the bond. They are designed for risk-averse investors who want to shelter their cash from the full force of the equity markets while, at the same time, reaping the rewards of a well-managed, balanced fund.

With-profits bonds are ideal for people looking to take a regular income from their savings and the part of the cash which buys into low-risk government gilts can provide a tax-free monthly income, while the funds invested in the equity or property markets have the potential to bring capital growth.

The nature of with-profits bonds means they should be viewed as medium to long-term investments. Because they can also come with healthy terminal bonuses — worth up to another 2.25 per cent a year of the bond's value — you will probably need to stay in the fund for at least five years to qualify for these additions, with earlier withdrawal of your funds likely to incur redemption penalties. The bonds qualify for spe-

cial tax treatment in the same way that life assurance products do. This means that the fund itself is subject to tax rather than any income taken from the bond or the value of its cash-in value.

Therefore lower and basic-rate taxpayers are able to take income of up to 5 per cent of the bond's value tax-free with higher-rate payers being subject to tax on a portion of any income drawn from the investment, depending on when they cash in the bond.

The main benefit to higher-rate taxpayers is that they can defer the payment of top-level tax on their investment for up to the maximum 20-year term for which a with-profits bond can be held.

The rules allow buyers to take up to 5 per cent of the purchase price of the bond each year, which has already been taxed at the basic rate, without incurring a 40 pence in the pound levy.

This means that higher-rate taxpayers can use with-profits bonds as a retirement vehicle, allowing the growth in the bond to roll up until they have retired and possibly reverted to being basic-rate taxpayers, effectively deferring the difference between the lower and higher tax bands — 17 per cent — for up to 20 years.

Additionally, bond-holders who normally pay income tax at the higher rate can plan to cash in all or part of their investment to coincide with a tax year when they do not expect to earn sufficient to result in being taxed at 40p in the pound.

Bonuses declared and added to with-profits bonds cannot generally be taken back once they have been paid although when markets fall sharply the funds can be hit with market value adjustments which can reduce the value of the investments.

Because of this, investors should resist the temptation to withdraw their money when equity markets nosedive or they could be faced with high penalties.

According to Roddy Kohn, of Kohn Cougar, a Bristol independent financial adviser, with-profits bonds can form an integral part of a balanced investment portfolio offering a relatively safe home for your cash as well as giving tax-efficient savings.

He said: "With-profits bonds offer good low-to-medium risk investments for those looking to take full advantage of tax breaks.

"Higher-rate taxpayers, in particular, can benefit by being able to take up to 5 per cent of the fund's purchase value without triggering a tax charge in addition to the basic rate which is already charged

directly to the fund rather than the investor.

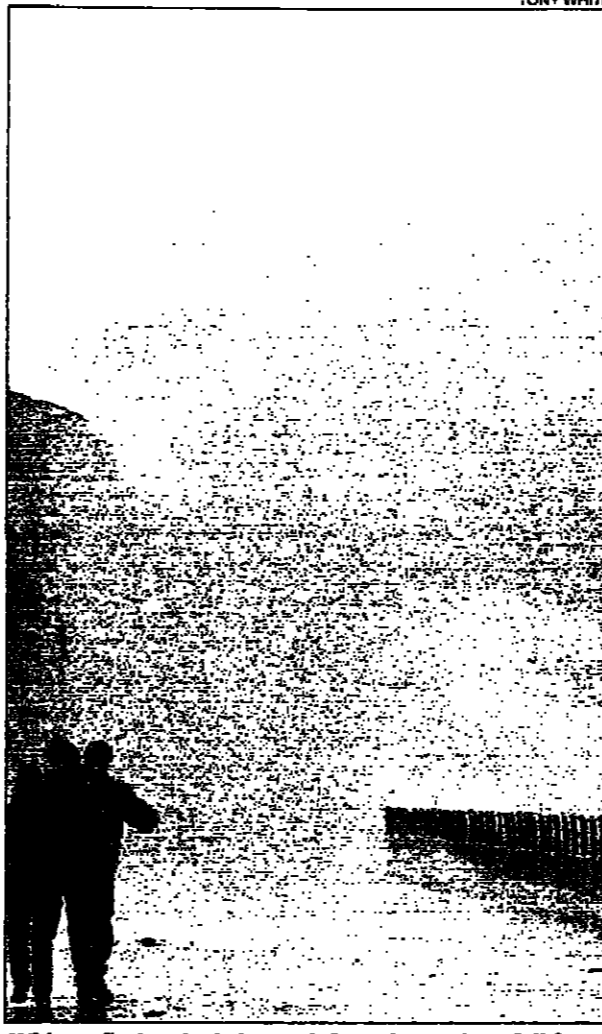
"This means they can defer higher-rate tax for up to 19 years before they encash the bond at the end of its term."

With-profits bonds do have an element of surprise about them with investors having to wait anxiously to see what bonus declarations are made by the insurance companies at the end of a year.

Because the bonuses vary depending on performance, and market conditions, hanging on to the investments for a reasonable amount of time is vital.

Steve Muir, spokesman for Sun Life Assurance, which offers a with-profits bond currently paying 7 per cent, said: "Investors should be looking to lock themselves in for at least five or six years.

"This is partly to avoid early withdrawal penalties but also to help smooth over any market fluctuations which could have a serious effect on the value of a bond if the cash was taking out at the wrong time."



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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

CU support for National Trust
National Trust members are being offered discounted household and motor insurance by Commercial Union.

Plans for the Millennium Dome may be in full swing, but if you have yet to organise your own private millennium extravaganza, help is at hand.

Charles Schwab, the execution-only stockbroker, will be holding its fifth annual private investors conference on April 25 at the ICC Birmingham.

SAVERS' BEST BUYS
Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Lists various bank accounts and their terms.

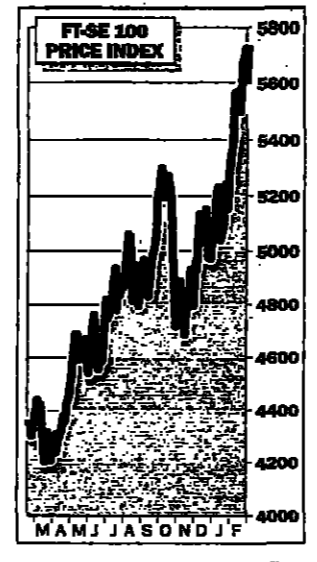
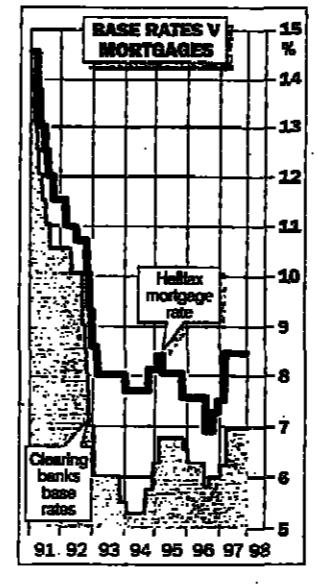
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS
Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Lists various notice accounts and bonds.

FIRST TESSAS (TAX-FREE)
Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Lists tax-free first tessa accounts.

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS
Table with columns: Card type, Interest per month, APR%, Fee per annum. Lists various credit cards.

PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS
Table with columns: Personal Loans, APR, Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs with insurance. Lists various personal loan offers.

RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING.



NATIONAL SAVINGS
Table with columns: Gross rate, At ten rates, 40%, Minimum investment, Notice, Contact. Lists various national savings products.

PENSION ANNUITIES
Table with columns: Single Life, Joint Life, 2/3 Widows. Lists pension annuity options for different life stages.

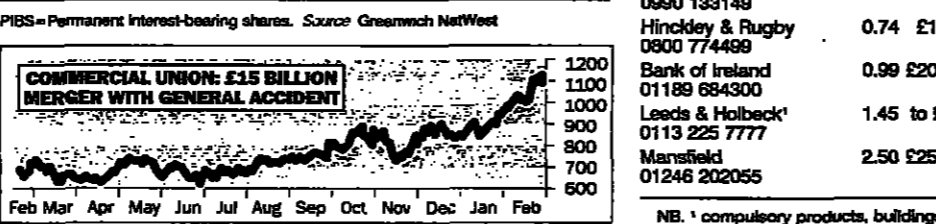
All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance. Statistics compiled by Lizanne Rose.

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

Table with columns: Investment (£), Company, Standard Rate (%). Lists guaranteed income bond products from various providers.

PIBS

Table with columns: Fixed Rate, Gross coupon, Buying price, Gross yield, Issue price, Minimum purchase. Lists various PIB (Permanent Interest-bearing Shares) products.



LARGER LENDERS

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Lists various larger lenders and their offerings.

LARGER LOANS

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Lists various larger loan products.

UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

Table listing various unit-linked insurance investment products, including AGNI LIFE ASSURANCE, ABREY LIFE, and others.

Table listing various unit-linked insurance investment products, including GUARDIAN ROYAL EXCHANGE, HALFAX LIFE LTD, and others.

Table listing various unit-linked insurance investment products, including LONDON LIFE, LONDON LIFE, and others.

Table listing various unit-linked insurance investment products, including SCOTTISH MUTUAL ASSURANCE, SCOTTISH MUTUAL ASSURANCE, and others.

Large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page, featuring the text 'BIGGER CALL FREE' and 'DIRECT SAVINGS'.

هكذا من الأصل

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

One windfall should be enough

From Mr Paul Boddam-Whetham
Sir, I am delighted on behalf of Woolwich shareholders that, according to today's Times (Fresh £100m windfall for Woolwich investors, February 19), we are to receive a special dividend with the potential of a further distribution of excess capital later in the year. For the basic allocation of 450 shares, the special dividend amounts to £9.95, with perhaps about £50 from the potential future distribution.

Let us remember, however, those 200,000 long-term members of the erstwhile building society who were disqualified from receiving their basic entitlement of

shares in the new Woolwich bank. As many will recall, this was because they did not have the minimum holding of £100 in their account at the specified date of December 31, 1995, although they had been members for some time, with substantial average balances.

I urge all shareholders to forego their special dividend and demand of the company that it distributes the excess capital to those who were disqualified from participating in the Woolwich at the time of conversion. This could be a cash distribution, or as a basic tranche of 450 shares.

If the "mountain of cash" over which Sir Brian Jenkins

and John Stewart preside is, as the financial columns suggest, around £300 million, then the distribution would be about £1,500 which would equate to a share value of 33p on the basic allocation. This seems an equitable rate, being around the median of the shares' performance since flotation.

I trust other shareholders will support me at the AGM on April 22, in urging the directors to take the opportunity to right a wrong perpetrated at the conversion.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL BODDAM-WHETHAM,
32 Upper Hall Park,
Berkhamsted,
Hertfordshire, HP4 2NP.



Paul Boddam-Whetham wants others to benefit as well

Instant access that wasn't very instant

From Dr Keith W. Lovel
Sir, I was interested to read your article (Row over marketing tool surfaces in an instant, February 14) on instant-access savings accounts, and I note that some customers wishing to withdraw money have to wait several days for it.

They are very lucky. I applied to withdraw from my Northern Rock Select Instant Account on December 18 last

and received a cheque on December 30. The cheque had to be banked and cleared before the money was available, but interest payment ceased on December 23.

I wonder if this is a record.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH LOVELL,
12a Raleigh Court,
Wallington,
Surrey,
SM6 0FH.



To whom would this be unfair?

From Mr C.A. Horn
The problem of pensions for the wives of ex-servicemen is not only the concern of officers' widows. I left the Forces with a pension as a warrant officer in 1959.

As 15 years of my service had been spent overseas, as a single man without the expense of married quarters and accompanying claims, I was a good investment.

Soon after leaving I married. My wife of over 30 years will have no claim to any part of my pension should I die before her.

Approaches to politicians in or out of office usually receive the reply that it would be "unfair" to change the rule. I am still not clear as to whom this unfairness would actually apply!

Yours faithfully,
C. HORN,
11 Harwell Road,
Sutton Courtenay,
Abingdon,
Oxfordshire,
OX14 4BN.

letters in your column regarding non-payment of service pensions to widows who married their husbands after retirement from the Services or redundancy.

I would like to point out that this situation is not peculiar to the Services but applies to occupational pensions in civilian life.

My husband's first wife died shortly after his early retirement.

We married two years later but he was unable to transfer the portion of his pension to which he had contributed for a wife, to me.

When he died eight years later, his pensions ceased immediately and I was left with only my state widow's pension.

On the subject of war widows' pensions, unlike all other pensions, these are not liable for income tax.

Yours faithfully,
BERYL SAMPSON,
8 Greenway,
Braunston,
Daventry,
Northants,
NN11 7HP.

Over to you, Mr Pearson

From Mr Clive Scott-Hopkins
Sir, Allow me to respond again to Mr Pearson.

So now we have it (A tax in all but name, Weekend Money Letters, February 14), a PEP and presumably the proposed Isa - is not (will not be) worth the Finance Act paper it is written on, beyond one tax year. My dictionary definition of "contract" is "an agreement", "a bargain", "with the terms and conditions" (ie, PEP Regulations 1995). Many people invested in Peps on the understanding that they were investing in a tax-favoured environment to help them to cope more adequately with retirement; there was no mention of a limited life - only death. I have no doubt that, in law, government can change people's "reasonable expectations" and they can interpret "retrospection" in whatever way suits them, but my dictionary defines it as "affecting things past". The proposal is to do just that - to affect past (not future) Peps.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE SCOTT-HOPKINS,
Towry Law Financial Services Limited,
Towry Law House,
57 High Street Windsor,
Berkshire, SL4 1LX.

General Accident and Commercial Union are to merge in a £15 billion deal. The new company, to be called CGU, will be the dominant force in UK composite insurance, eclipsing even its biggest rival, Royal & Sun Alliance, capitalised - at £11.6 billion after a merger in 1996. CGU will have £100 billion of assets under management worldwide.

□ As part of an overhaul of its UK sales strategy, Prudential is poised to abandon commission-based pay. Sir Peter Davis, group chief executive, admitted on Wednesday that his review of the company's UK operation had revealed a change was needed to the way Prudential's 4,500 salesmen sold products. The comments came as the company announced a 15 per cent increase in operating profit for the year.

□ A poll of Bradford & Bingley Building Society's two million members reveals that more than half support mutualism, indicating that they are not primarily interested in windfalls. Fewer than 10 per cent of the 500,000 savers and borrowers who responded wanted the society to convert. Britain's second-largest society is now spending £2 million a week on its members' benefits package, with higher rates for savers and lower mortgage rates.

□ The National Association of Pension Funds has appealed to the Chancellor not to remove higher-rate tax relief on pension contributions, or to increase the burden of taxation on pension funds in next month's Budget, fearing that a further tax rise could mean that companies become less willing to run employee pension schemes.

□ Standard Life announced on Tuesday that it is launching a dedicated fund management arm concentrating on two areas: pooled corporate pension funds and retail sales of unit trusts. Standard Life aims to double its investment business to £8 billion within three years and its unit trust business to £2 billion.

□ The board of Birmingham Midshires may come under pressure from members to renegotiate the price being paid for the society by the Royal Bank of Scotland. The subsequent surge in share prices of the converted societies, such as Halifax, now makes the price of between £600 million and £630 million seem a bargain for RBS.

THIS WEEK IN MONEY

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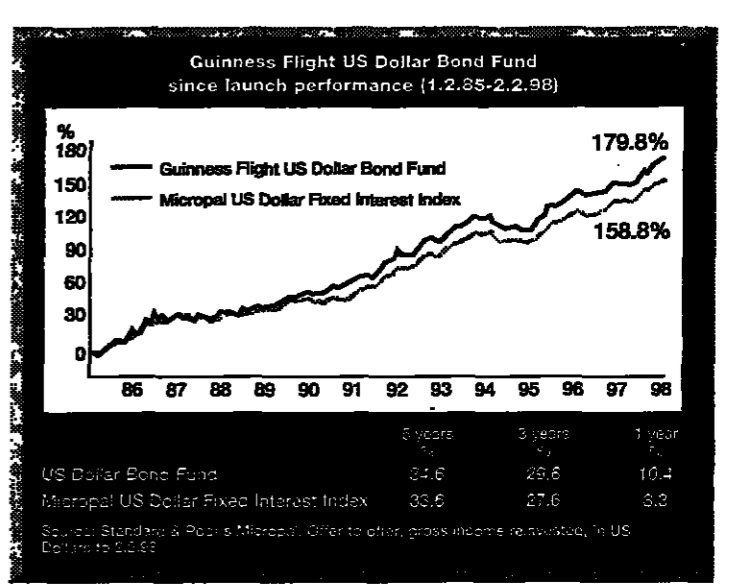
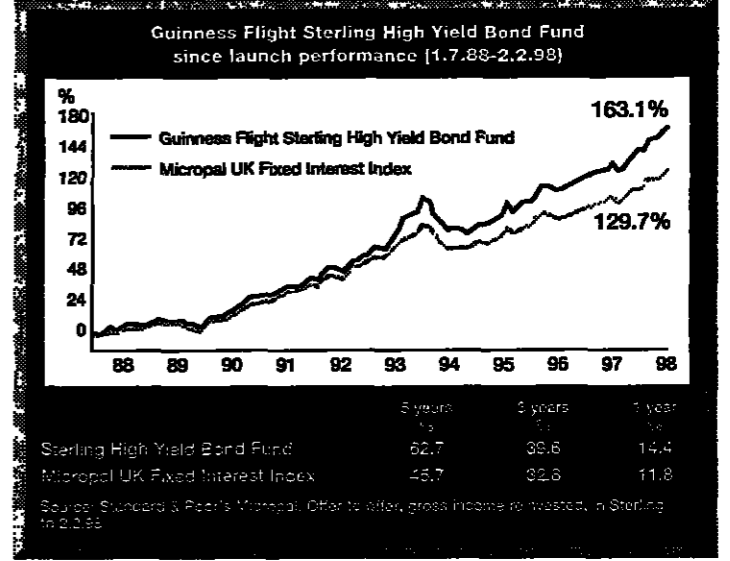
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- G7 Central Bankers will be more likely to cut rates in 1998 than raise them, in order to maintain growth. If growth in the West were to slip, then the Asian crisis could turn into a global depression. The onus is on them to maintain world growth.

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ork on pany

Susan Emmett investigates the factors that have led to success for some amateur enthusiasts while

Clubbing together against the world's full-time investors

The tables turned for the Quayside Ladies Investment Club when they gave up shedding the pounds and began piling them on. The group, which started life as a slimmers' association, is one of three investment clubs singled out this week by ProShare, the organisation dedicated to promoting the private ownership of shares.

The all-female group, which won the prize for best new investment club of 1997, was joined by The Elizabeth Swalocs Investment Club, winners of the investment club of the year award, and Tynes International Investment Club, the most successful investment club of the year.

The awards, sponsored by the London Stock Exchange and Barclays Stockbrokers, reflect the growing popularity of investment clubs. There are currently 2,000 in the UK and over one million investors belong to a club around the world.

Each of the 2,000 invest-

ment clubs, made up of friends or work colleagues who pool their resources together to invest in the stock market, has its own personality and little quirks. Some are made up of experienced investors while others have little or no knowledge of the stock market.

Until recently, the Quayside Ladies Club was certainly the latter. All seven members live in the same building on the waterfront in Liverpool and just over a year ago decided to join forces to give each other moral support in counting the calories. But after three weeks' frugality, restraint gave way to coffee and cakes and watching the markets. They abandoned all ambitions of turning themselves into supermodels and concentrated instead on becoming fat cats after reading about the Beardstown Ladies in America, who shot to fame after outperforming Wall Street professionals for several years on the run.

Inspired by the tale, the Quayside Ladies adopted their



Simply the best: from left, Esther Drews, Winefride Park, Dorothy Eccles and Doris Blackmon

playing with a big toy", were amazed by the number of investors who contacted them both in the UK and the US.

But biggest surprise came when the Stockbytes Club of Portland, Oregon, challenged the Brits to a cyber duel where both clubs invest the London and US markets. Swalocs are well ahead.

But the real money is being made by the Tynes International. The Most Successful Investment Club of 1997 has reported a staggering year-end profit of 101 per cent on its original investment, easily beating the majority of professionally managed funds. The team of 14, mostly made up of

husbands and wives, has concentrated on blue chip companies since they joined forces in late 1996.

Its pickings include Henlys Group, Asda, Marks & Spencer, Rentokil and Railtrack and their portfolio is worth about £5,500.

The group is a mixture of genuine and imported Yorkshire people, with backgrounds from as far afield as Sweden, Ireland, Wales and Lancashire.

Frank Milner, a retired successful businessman whose wife and son are also members of the club, said: "When we first started off

attendance was not 100 per cent. Now everybody tries to get there every month and they are all really keen to be part of it. That's the most rewarding part."

For further information ring ProShare on 0171 394 5200. The ProShare Investment Club manual, normally £25, will cost £18 for readers of *The Times*.

Weekend Money regularly monitors the performance of two investment clubs, the *Victoria of Truro* and *London-deiry-based Merrydown*. For the latest report from our two sets of amateur investors, see next week.

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Gavin Lumsden and Marianne Curphey give a timely reminder



Bed and breakfasting his shares to save tax was the last thing on Clark Gable's mind in *It Happened One Night*

With the end of the tax year just over a month away investors should seriously consider giving their holdings of shares and unit trusts a good spring clean. One essential task for tidy investors is "bed and breakfasting".

Start to bed and breakfast again

There are millions of former building society members who received windfall shares last year. Shares in the Alliance & Leicester, Halifax, Woolwich and Northern Rock were given free to members when they became banks in 1997, and all their growth is potential gain.

Bed and breakfasting is the easy name given to a very useful way of minimising your liability to capital gains tax. Investors accrue gains when they sell their investments, the gain being the difference between what they paid for the investment and the price at which they sold.

Those who received the maximum 1,381 shares from the Halifax could now be sitting on equity worth £12,719. This represents a taxable gain of £6,219. These investors should transfer some shares to a spouse or hope they have some other loss-making investments against which they can offset their gain.

Those who received the maximum 1,381 shares from the Halifax could now be sitting on equity worth £12,719. This represents a taxable gain of £6,219. These investors should transfer some shares to a spouse or hope they have some other loss-making investments against which they can offset their gain.

The taxman will take a 40 per cent chunk of any gains you make over £6,500 in any one financial year. However, with a bit of forward planning CGT is an easy tax to avoid.

It is still worth bed and breakfasting windfall shares even if your gains are not near the threshold. For example, if Halifax shares continue to rise, those 330 shares could be worth £3,870 in 12 months' time. All this would be counted as gain if you sold them then. But if you bed and breakfast now and sell in 12 months' time the gain will be just £829.

Stockbrokers charge commission too, but usually only on the sale and not on the purchase. You will also have to pay stamp duty equivalent to 0.5 per cent of the value of the deal on repurchase. Among the cheapest are the Share Centre (0800 800008), charging 1 per cent of your holdings with a minimum of £7.50; Skipton Building Society, 0.75 per cent for the first £1,000 and 0.1 per cent thereafter, minimum £25; Charles Schwab, with a £15 per deal offer until March 26; NatWest Stockbrokers, 1 per cent on the first £4,000.

This was good news for investors who

Other people who should consider the

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UNDYNAMIC DUO 50

Graham Searjeant calls for change at the top of NatWest

WEEKEND MONEY

CLUB TOGETHER 62

The ladies who piled on the pounds



Caroline Merrell says the 150-year-old tradition of commission is to end

Pru has a new sales policy



Gone fishing: many of the Prudential's 4,500 salesmen will perhaps be able to join their boss Sir Peter Davis on the beach — but in slightly cheaper resorts once their commission goes

Prudential's admission this week, that it intended to abandon commission as a way of motivating its 4,500 salesmen, could herald a revolution in the retail financial services marketplace.

Commission, usually paid at the start of the policy term, has a detrimental effect on investment performance: it can cut returns by up to a quarter. Commission has also been blamed for much of the mis-selling that has occurred involving endowments and personal pensions.

ing clients and selling products door to door, will be replaced by a salesman at the end of a telephone who will manage "products against need". The restructuring of the Prudential follows a review of the Prudential's UK strategy in the wake of severe castigation by the regulating authorities.

David Moran, Barclays Life's sales recruitment director, said he believed that a mixture of salary and commission was the correct method of remunerating salesmen. He said: "The days of the commission-only salesforce are numbered."

Office of Fair Trading and other consumer organisations that have been long-term critics of commission. The Inland Revenue has questioned the self-employed status enjoyed by those whose only source of income is the commission earned from selling life insurance policies.

INSIDE 51 Anne Ashworth on the latest savings offers MORTGAGES 49 New-style lenders target the self-employed INVESTMENT 63 Bed and breakfast deals for your shares WEEKEND MONEY GUIDES Part 4 TAX AND FINANCIAL PLANNING BUSINESS NEWS PAGES 26-31 WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

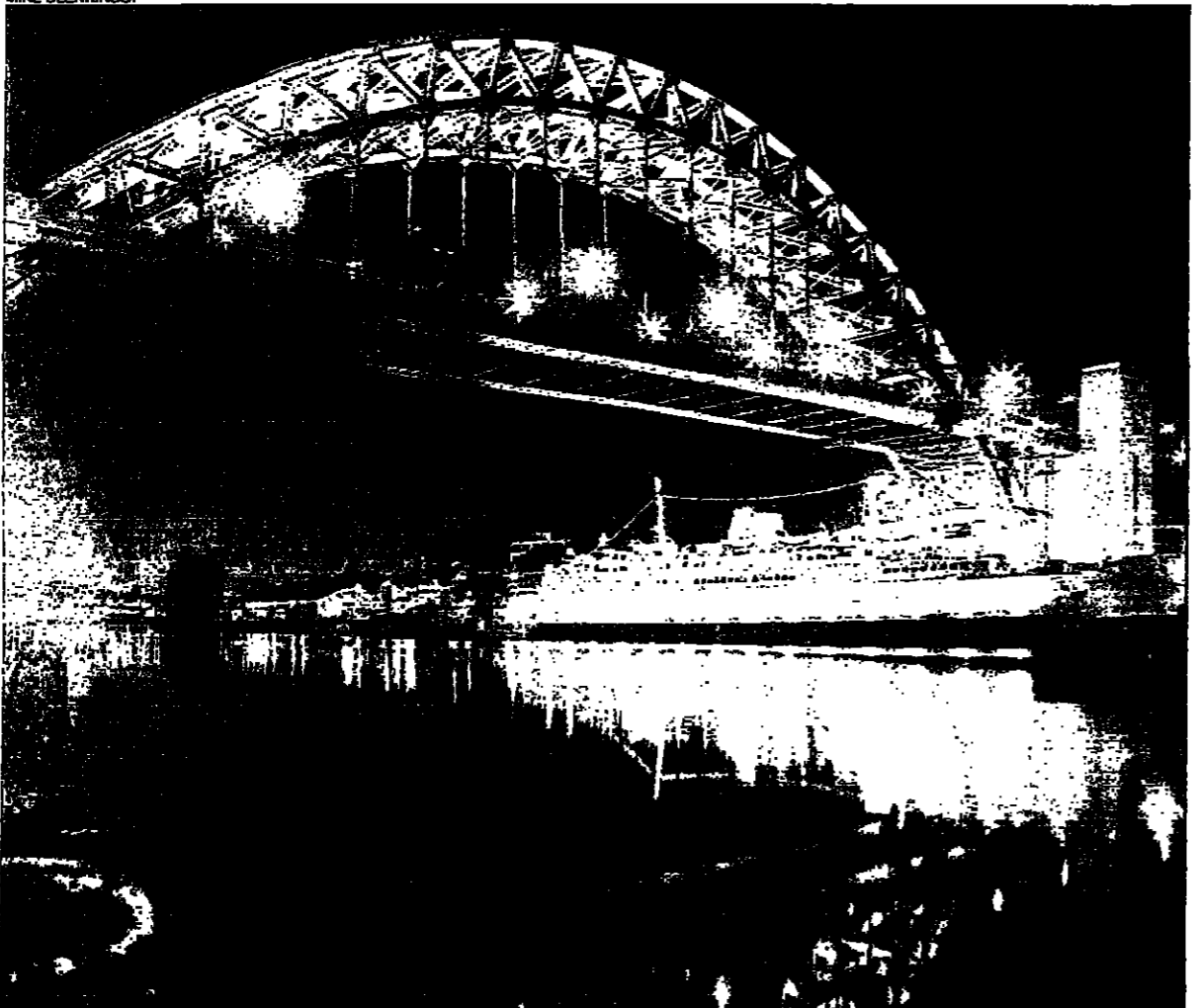
Northern Rock takes direct action in fight to woo savers

Northern Rock, the Newcastle bank which shed its mutual status last year, is raising the stakes in the fight for billions of pounds' worth of the nation's savings with the launch next month of a new direct savings division offering highly competitive rates.

Adam Applegarth, Northern Rock executive director, claimed that the bank could offer the better rates because of cost savings achieved by the use of technology. He said: "The launch of the Save Direct Instant account marks only the first phase of our new operation. We will be looking to add more features to further enhance the services it offers."

machines, but at a charge of £120 per withdrawal. The rules mean that customers do not strictly have instant access to their accounts. However, the term is now applied to a number of accounts whose savers must wait several days before laying hands on their cash, or must pay a fee for withdrawals.

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Friend in the North: Northern Rock, which is based in Newcastle, has launched a direct savings account

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SHOPPING



Fashion: around the world in eighty ways

Page 5

REAL LIFE



In the line of fire: confessions of an armed bodyguard

Page 23

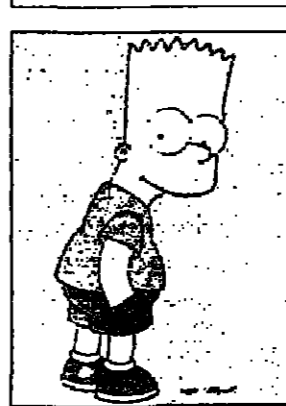
TRAVEL



Face to face with Uganda's great apes

Page 25

GAMES



Virtual Bart - and win £2,000 worth of palmtops

Page 39

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28 1998

THE TIMES WEEKEND

The dragon still breathes fire



Surveying the marks of an ancient history: Richard Burton stands amid the Druid stones which overlook Lower Fishguard in a scene from a film version of Dylan Thomas's definitive work, Under Milk Wood

A few weeks ago the highly successful rock band Catatonia gave a performance in their homeland and sang one of their songs, which are mostly in English, in their native language. The audience loved it, but a critic in The Times characterised it as an appeal to "cheap nationalism". Why cheap? Because Catatonia are Welsh, that's why. If they had been a famous Swedish band performing in Swedish to a Stockholm audience, it would have been patriotic: because it was five Welsh musicians singing in Welsh in Cardiff, it was cheap nationalism, and the headline to the review was par for the course: "Tending to dragon and on". English denigration of things Welsh is almost as old as history, and ranges from rude nursery rhymes to Shakespeare's fond mockery of Owain Glyndwr. It has its roots in the very difference of the Welsh: difference of race, difference of language, difference of custom and history. The Welsh, unlike the English, were never conquered by the Saxons after the withdrawal of the Roman Empire, and formed a Celtic Christian enclave of the west when all England and most of Europe had been conquered by pagans. Their high-flown conglomeration of quarrelsome petty king-

On the eve of St David's Day, Jan Morris finds the Welsh buoyantly shrugging off the English yoke

doms, immured in impenetrable mountains, rich in music, poetry, folklore, violence and arcane loyalties, must have seemed almost unimaginably alien to the Saxons of England: like most aliens and outsiders, the Welsh doubtless inspired a fear and suspicion which were transmuted into mockery. They were strange, they were separate, they were hard to understand: let's make fun of them! So, down all succeeding centuries, the English have distrusted, despised and laughed nervously at the Welsh. Taffy is a Welshman, Taffy is a thief. Just the word "Welsh" has all too often been a term of abuse, implying thievery, trickery, lasciviousness, mendacity and a tendency to run away from debts. A Welsh mile was interminable. A Welsh grasshopper was a louse. Welsh parsley was the hangman's rope and Welsh rabbit was toasted cheese. Welsh people compounded the irritation by their devotion to their own Celtic language, Cymraeg, a particular affront at a time when English was fast becoming a lingua franca for half the world. The English have always resented the very existence of Cymraeg - think of it, an apparently inextinguishable foreign language within the limits of their own island. They have always laughed at its spelling and jeered at its pronunciation: "gibberish" has habitually been their word for it, as it used to be for the languages of wogs and tribes-

people, and to this day they fail to recognise that just because a Welsh word looks strange to them, it is not in the least strange to the Welsh. They have often thought of Cymraeg as a kind of secret code intended to deceive them. "The minute you go into a Welsh pub" - how often have you heard them say this? - "they all start talking Welsh." It never seems to occur to them that the people in the pub have been talking Welsh all evening, that being their natural means of communication. The Welsh have generally taken it all on the chin, having acquired long ago the subservient flexibility of a conquered people. They have aimed to please, and this has only aggravated their reputation for unreliability among the English - themselves, of course, one and all as honest and straightforward as John Bull himself. Why could not the Welsh be like the Scots, soldiers bold and true, who looked you in the eye and were loyal to Queen and country? For that matter, why could they not be like the Irish, rebels or terrorists perhaps, but gregarious, jolly fellows to drink Guinness with in pubs? The Welsh are still different. It disconcerts the English to find that perfectly Anglicised Welsh citizens, perhaps half-English people like

Continued on page 3

SHOPPING 45 FOOD & DRINK 67 PROPERTY 8-10 GARDENING 13-15 HOME LIFE 16,17 COUNTRY LIFE 18,19 TRAVEL 25-33 GAMES 39,40

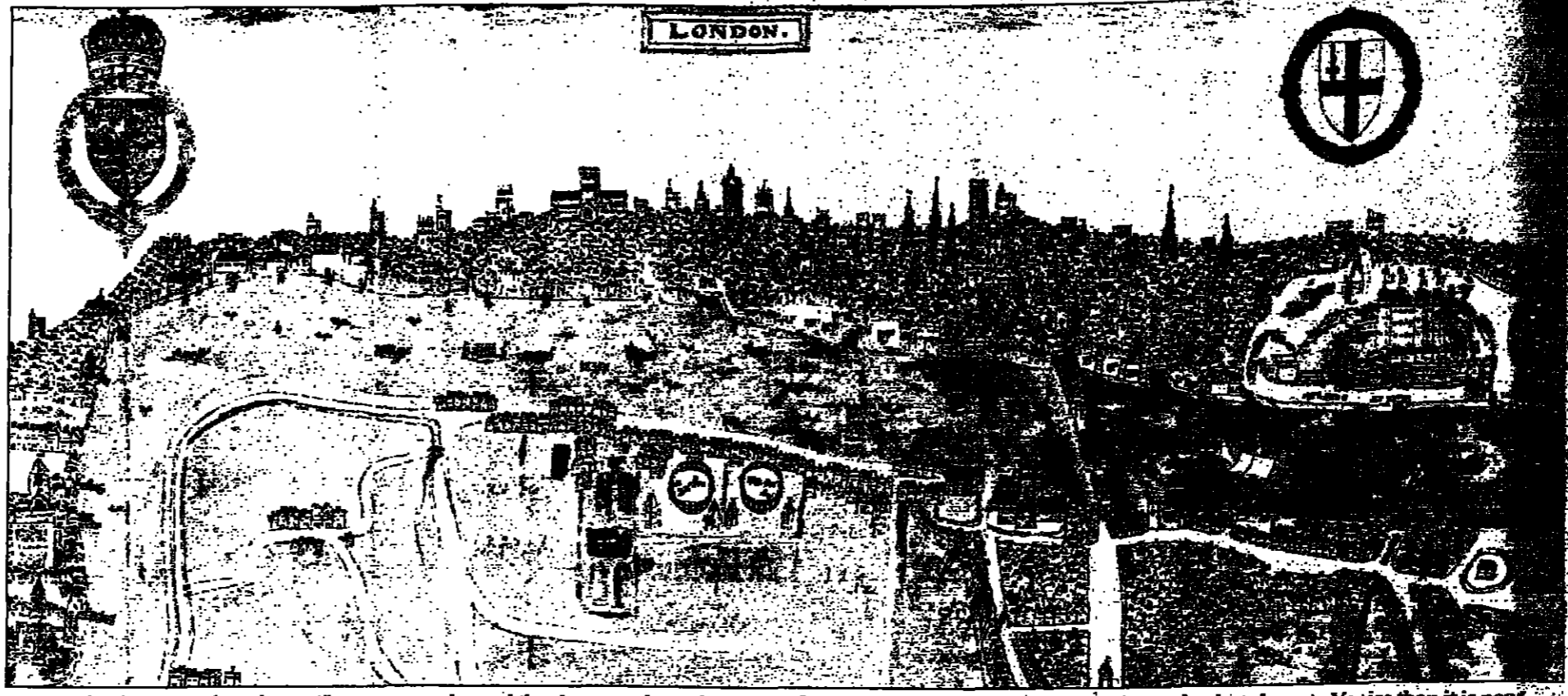
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Peter Ackroyd takes Erica Wagner on a tour of the mean streets and divine architecture of the 16th century

'Thomas More's London could be the city of God'



London in 1588. Ackroyd says: 'It was very noisy and the river was the main means of communication. It wasn't exactly like Venice, but closer to Venice than it is now.'



Ackroyd at traitor's gate, through which More was taken to the Tower of London

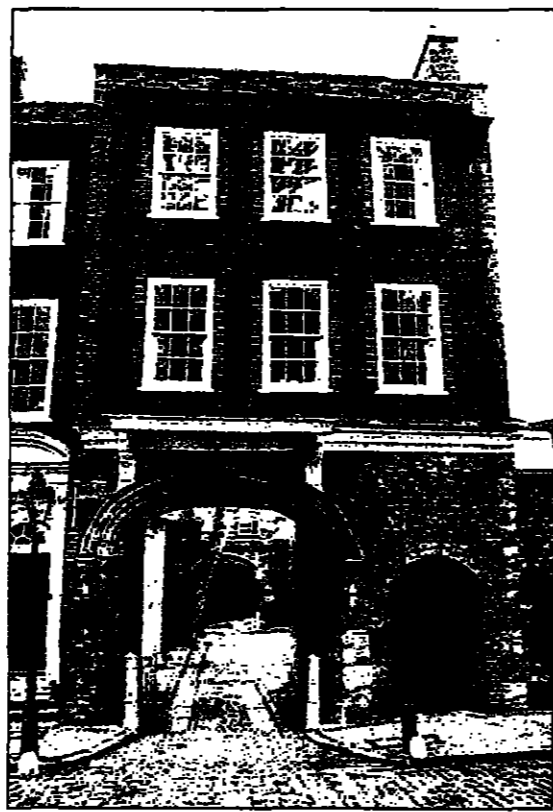
I thought there would be nothing left. The depredations of the Great Fire of London, and the Blitz three centuries after that, would have destroyed the London whose streets St Thomas More had walked. In the 15th century, when More was born, Fleet Street was a flowing river; in the 16th century, when he died, another hundred years would pass before the birth of Sir Christopher Wren, whose architecture shaped what today seems the ancient city. Now, from Aldwych to Charterhouse Square to Cheapside to the Tower, there are canyons of steel and glass that seem to allow no memory of the past. Unless you are privileged to walk those streets in the company of Peter Ackroyd, as I did retracing the steps of More, the subject of Ackroyd's latest biography. Then the layers of London's history are exposed as if fire and bombs had never buried them. By Ludgate Circus a young man

walks towards us wearing the striped jacket of the floor of the London Stock Exchange and recalling the "party-coloured" barrister's gown which More would have worn at the bar. With affection in his voice Ackroyd calls London an uncivilised city, "built upon money and not upon the needs of its citizens, a marketplace from Roman times". A merger between the investment bank UBS and the Swiss Bank Corporation, set to cost 200 staff their jobs, seems to bear out his theory. "I walked the old perimeter of the London wall the other day," he says, as we dodge the traffic. A few shards of the wall, Roman and medieval, are still scattered about the City. "I noticed that the wall is now covered with security cameras — so it's retained its defensive purpose." Ackroyd's biography of More is the latest chapter in the author's one great book — his decades-long exploration of the city which he loves best

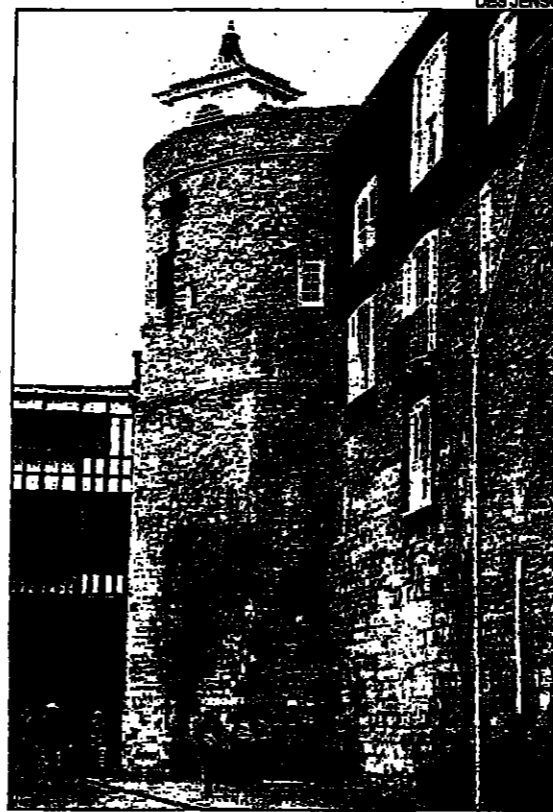
in the world. More, like Ackroyd — and like Blake and Dickens, subjects of his past books — was a born Londoner and wished to be remembered as such. He composed his own epitaph in the late spring of 1532: "Thomas More, a Londoner borne, of no noble family," he began, before enumerating the official posts he had held in the service of the King and omitting any mention of his *Utopia*, for which he is perhaps best remembered. His thoughts had turned to his own mortality. On New Year's Day of that year the King and his Lord Chancellor exchanged gifts: Henry VIII gave Sir Thomas More an opulent golden bowl; More gave his monarch a walking stick decorated with gold leaf. But less than six months later More had made another presentation to the King — his great seal, and with it his resignation from the executioner's axe. Courteous to the last, he gave the axeman a gold coin. It was London that made More. His legal career was a steppingstone to his role as courtier and King's ill-fated adviser and it was London that drew Peter Ackroyd farther back into London's history than he has ever ventured. More was born on February 7, 1478, in his father's house on Milk Street, off Cheapside, and went to school in Threadneedle Street. He lived for much of his life in this crowded heart of the City, raising his growing family in a grand stone house in Bucklersbury. On a grey February morning half a millennium later, we have to shout above the din of traffic. "It probably wouldn't have been any less noisy 500 years ago than it is now," Ackroyd reflects at high volume. "Just a different kind of noise." We are striding down Cheapside at a good clip and Ackroyd, dapper in silk tie and swinging coat-tails, conjures a vanished city out of the air. At the age of seven More made his way to St Anthony's School through a street just as commercial as it is now — but commercial in a fashion more familiar to the denizens of Marrakesh than those of



Thomas More, second left, with his family. Ackroyd says: 'People forget that he was a powerful man; never unworshiped as saints are presumed to be'



More lodged with the monks in Charterhouse, left. The Tower, above, where he spent his final days



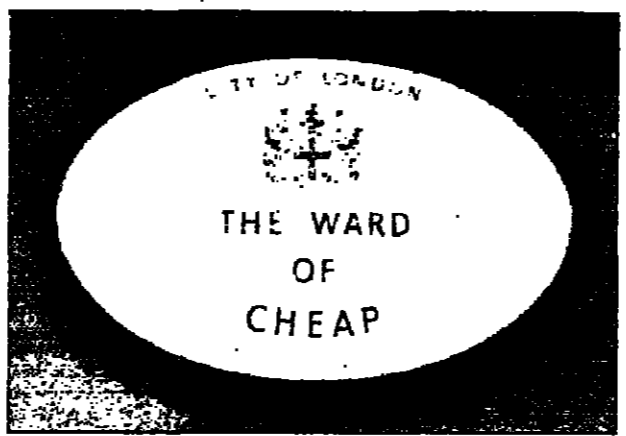
J.P. Morgan. "You have to imagine a huge market, open-air stalls, ramshackle sheds. Cheapside was much wider than it now, much muddier." The hustle and bustle of his youth stayed with More for life, says Ackroyd. "His polemics are full of the language of the streets. Throughout his writing you find all kinds of cockneyisms, and he was quite capable of being obscene — in that sense he was a model Londoner." We turn into Bucklersbury and stand outside St Stephen Walbrook, one of Wren's fairest creations. In its earlier incarnation it was More's parish church, and his first

wife was buried within its walls. Ackroyd dismisses the firm ground upon which we stand, indicating where the river Walbrook would have run, just past the church. "His house was called the Old Barge, and barges would come and dock just outside. It's funny to think of it now. The river was the main means of communication. It wasn't exactly like Venice, but closer to Venice than it is now." Bucklersbury is now home to forbidding cliffs of offices, but More's residence would have been as intimidating, in its way. He was a successful lawyer, close to the courts of two kings, and from

1510 under-sheriff of London. "It was a big house," Ackroyd says. A surviving inventory details "a gret cage fir birds", "a gret mapp of all the world" and "a table [picture] of Sir Thomas More's face" (he was knighted by Henry VIII in 1520). "People forget that he was a wealthy, powerful, influential man — he was never unworshiped as saints are presumed to be, but ambitious and successful." The perfect inhabitant, then, of a commercial hub of enormous power. "Even then the City was powerful: there were times in More's childhood where the city was more powerful than any monarch." The power of the modern City clearly thrills Ackroyd as much as its past glories: he is no nostalgia-monger, admiring Peter Palumbo's pink-and-green periscope at No 1 Poultry as much as his imagined Old Barge. "London's always been rebuilt, always been ugly," he says. "That's part of its character. I don't see any reason why it should have to change artificially to suit people's demands for some kind of heritage." Despite his wealth, More lodged with the Carthusian monks in Charterhouse, near Smithfield Market, while he

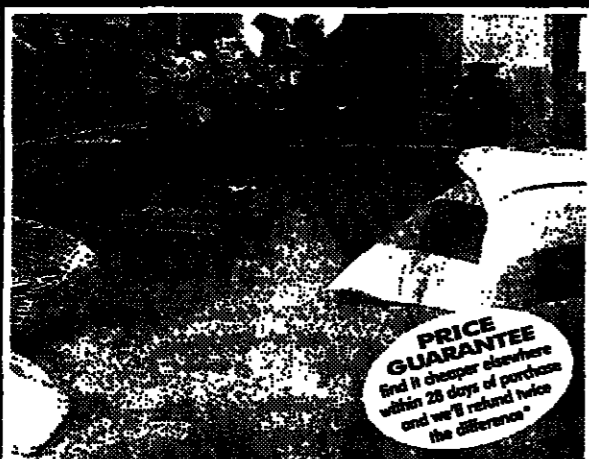
proclaiming Henry VIII head of the Church of England. Across from the Tower, over a modern river of rushing cars, is a plaque on the green where More was beheaded. It states that Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, and one of the commissioners inquiring into More's treason, did not long survive Henry's whim: he was sent to the block in 1540. A brisk breeze blows from the river, as it might have the day More died; we can see a square of Roman wall, just as More did before he saw no more. "The material world around him was the single most important network of More's life," Ackroyd says. "The very presence of London's churches was an emblem of the divine community on earth; the nature of his society was heralded in ritualistic and symbolic forms down the streets in which he walked. His Catholicism was imbued with the spirituality of the material world — each was a token of the other. For him, the streets of London could become, on one level, the City of God." Thomas More based the physical description of *Utopia* on the island of Utopia, on London; in London, one senses, Ackroyd has found his own Utopia. ● The Life of Thomas More, Chato & Windus, £20

trained as a lawyer in Lincoln's Inn at the end of the 15th century. We pass through what was once a "smooth field" for horse-racing, past the 12th-century church of Bartholomew the Great, past the hospital which was already old in More's day. More revisited the area as Lord Chancellor, when his duties included overseeing the burning of heretics. In the 19th century, workmen found charred wooden stumps and chips of human bone where the market now stands. "Interesting," Ackroyd says with a grin, "having a meat market and a hospital and a place for burning people alive all in the same place. There's a kind of unity about it." But the unity of More's life led him to his martyrdom, and we finish our tour at the Tower of London. We stand before Traitor's Gate, where More was brought after refusing to sign the 1534 Act of Supremacy



The boundaries of Cheapside are still clearly marked

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A burgeoning pride in all things Welsh: the traditional culture continues, with yearly cisteddods such as this one in Gwynedd in 1994 (right), but poetry, the visual arts and new bands like Catatonia (left) are flourishing, too



All for Wales: Raidine Carter and Danielle Sullivan celebrate the referendum at Cardiff Castle. Catherine Zeta-Jones casts her vote in the support of a Welsh assembly, and (far right) the Manic Street Preachers

Continued from page 1
me, are passionate Welsh patriots beneath the veneer. There is something unpredictable about Wales. You can never be quite sure what is going on, or what is being talked and felt behind an apparently familiar front.

This hidden reserve is probably what has enabled the Welsh, perhaps more successfully than any of the other Celtic nations, to preserve their language and their intimate culture. Not since 1410 have they risen to arms against English sovereignty, but they have managed by guile, compromise and a sort of calculated apathy to maintain their identity nonetheless, until it now seems safe to say that they are never going to lose it.

It is strange that the ancient antipathy of the English towards Wales has lately reached a newly disagreeable peak, epitomised by the discomfiture of a London journalist, A.A. Gill, who has been so persistently unpleasant about almost everything Welsh that he could lay claim to being the most actively disliked man in Wales. He is only the leader of the pack, though. Almost every reference to Wales in the London press, especially in the broadsheets, contains some sour witticism, some snide allusion, some expression of contempt. English journalists no longer dare to express their prejudices about Jews, Mus-

lims, blacks or Irishmen, but the Welsh, it appears, are fair game still.

This is ironic, because in fact Wales is entering an extraordinarily interesting and fecund period of its history. It is developing into a new kind of country, potentially a model small country, and Mr Gill and his colleagues seem to be unaware of the process, or perhaps prefer to ignore it. In both their two languages the young Welsh are now performing and producing and imagining with a fresh subtlety and sophistication. It is symbolic that the title-song of Catatonia's new album, *International Velvet*, should end with the words, expressed in bitter-sweet ambiguity, "Every day when I wake up I thank the Lord I'm Welsh".

Times are changing in Wales. The international success of rock bands like Catatonia, Manic Street Preachers and Super Furry Animals, the proud Welshness of stars like Anthony Hopkins and Bryn Terfel, are only the most obvious signs of vivacity: it is the general state of Welsh intellectual and artistic life that really counts. Poetry, for example, historically the prime Welsh medium, thrives both in Welsh and English — probably a thousand poets, so an American authority recently assured me, now actively practise the fearfully difficult poetic form called

cyghanedd. Welsh drama and cinema are wonderfully alive. Welsh classical music burgeons. Welsh historiography has stormed into a new maturity, and there has been a remarkable resurgence of the visual arts, generally supposed to be a blind spot of the Welsh culture.

No briefly visiting journalist, let alone one who does not speak Welsh, can begin to measure this growing strength and confidence. As Cerys Matthews, Catatonia's lead singer, said in Cardiff the other day: "At the moment there is such a lovely atmosphere that anything is possible." In short, English contempt for Wales is long out of date. It is even more so because in political terms Wales stands upon the brink of a fascinating future.

English people delight in saying that last year's devolution referendum was an unconvincingly close-run thing. However, they do not realise that it was really an extraordinary symptom of new assurance. In 1979, four out of five people in Wales voted against any kind of home rule. In 1997 a majority voted for it — a swing of opinion which, in any other circumstance, would have wildly excited the psephologists.

What is more, the vote was not split along the lines beloved of English pundits — the lines between north Wales and south, between the Welsh language and the English. It was generally split between east and west. The parts closest to England, and most heavily Anglicised, voted no to devolution, the parts further away, and most rooted in Welshness, voted yes (though in the case of Anglesey, which swarms with elderly English settlers, only just). The people of the old coal valleys were as positive as the milk farmers of Ceredigion. It was a victory not just for the idea of home rule, but for a Welsh Wales as against a British Wales.

Whatever disgruntled Tories, Cardiff capitalists and humiliated Old Labour fossils say, it changed everything in Wales, for the narrowness of the vote was itself a happy denouement of a kind. It meant there could be no sense of triumphalism among the winners. On the contrary, the best Welsh minds were united by it in resolving that reconciliation must be the first priority of a new Wales. Silly old rivalries which have unnecessarily plagued the country

must come to an end, and everybody living in this glorious place, whatever their origins, whatever their first language, whether they vote Conservative, Labour, Liberal or Plaid Cymru, must be persuaded that Welshness can be the happiest of conditions for anyone ready to adopt it — "cool" for the young, satisfying for the middle-aged, consolatory for the old.

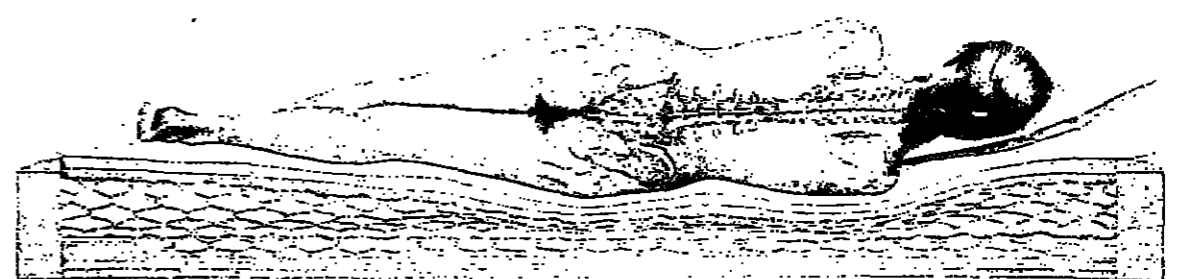
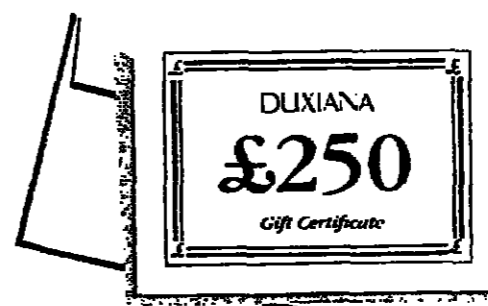
"Welshness!" I hear readers scoff. "What is, when was, Welshness?" I will tell you what it can be, and what in the new Wales I hope it will be. It is the blessed condition of living among people who share the same values, the same prides, the same sense of family, the same historical memories, the same sense of scale, the same incomparable landscape, whether they have lived in the same valley for a thousand years or have just arrived from less fortunate parts.

There is scarcely a schoolchild in Wales today who does not learn the Welsh language; there is no Welsh person who does not speak English, and precious few who bear any malice against England, however often they are goaded by crudely insensitive English incomers or crassly ungentlemanly English reporters. In another couple of generations, with luck, released from London's apron-strings, this can be a truly modern small country, bilingual (multilingual, perhaps), progressive in its outlook, ancient in its loyalties, proud of itself and content with its place in the wider community of Europe.

A.A. Gill and others of his kind cannot conceive of such a Wales; but then, 500 years ago his predecessors would hardly have believed that at the end of the 20th century the Welsh, those ignorant half-savages of the west, would still be fighting so successfully for their identity and their language, and still dreaming of new fulfilment for their nation.

I am one of many who believe, this St David's Day, that the dream will come true and that, after 1,000 years of trying, England has finally failed to remould Wales in its own chosen image. And I am reminded of the moment in *My Fair Lady* when Eliza bursts into a song of prophetic love-hate against her Pygmalion. Do you remember it? "Just you wait. 'Erry 'iggins, just you wait..."

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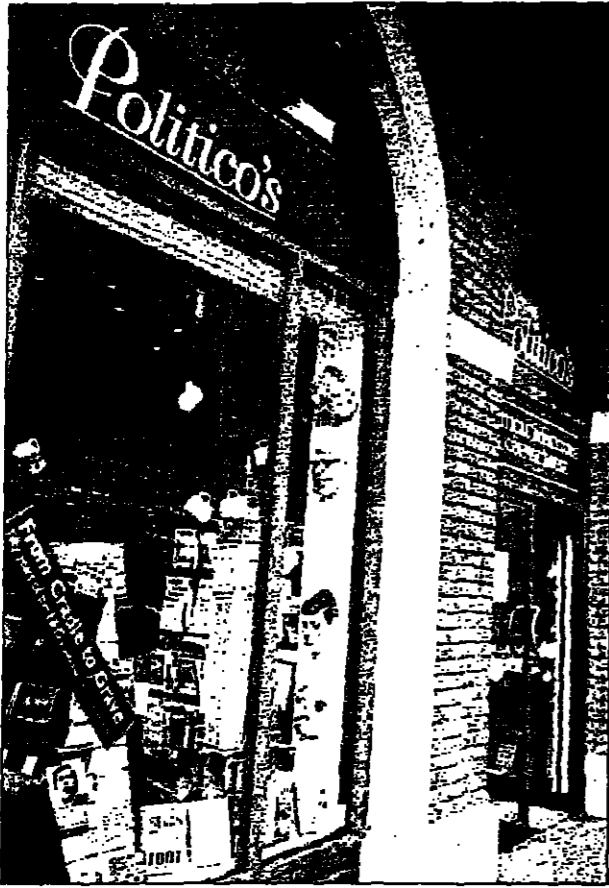
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Where MPs are brought to book



Austin Mitchell with Iain Dale, the owner of Politico's. "The shop has been a godsend for Westminster. It has given the area a focal point"

Austin Mitchell is among the many MPs who enjoy the books and memorabilia at Politico's, Michael Cable writes

FOR any self-confessed political junkie like Austin Mitchell, Politico's has an irresistible charm. The maverick Labour MP was one of the first through the door when, almost exactly a year ago, the political bookstore and coffee house just ten minutes' walk from the Houses of Parliament was opened.

He has been a regular browser ever since, perusing the shelves of new and second-hand books, CDs and cassettes of collected speeches, pictures, posters, cartoons and other political memorabilia.

The shop, he says, has been a godsend for Westminster. "Like the governmental quarters of most capital cities, it is a fairly dead area," he says. "This has given it a focal point, an oasis in the desert."

The owner of the shop is Iain Dale, a former parliamentary lobbyist who was inspired by the success of a similar venture in Washington. "That started off as just a small kiosk on one of the stations when I first noticed it, but it was always full of people," he says. "The next time I went back, it had moved

to a much bigger place near the White House. I thought it was brilliant and when I fell out with my partner in the lobbying business, I decided to see if such a shop could do as well over here."

Dale, who has published books on the sayings of Baronsess Thatcher and Tony Blair, and is working on a Bill Clinton joke book, has attracted cabinet ministers past and present, as well as a steady stream of MPs, civil servants, journalists, lobbyists, researchers and party workers to the shop. Other regulars, he says, are "political junkies like Austin, who are fascinated by the political personalities."

The Member for Great Grimsby buys mostly books and recorded speeches going as far back as Gladstone, which he listens to in his car. "I thought it might improve my speech-making but it hasn't," he says. "Being on TV doesn't help: I'm used to reading from an autotape." He regrets that the standard

of speaking in the House has deteriorated and fears that the late Enoch Powell was the last of the great orators. "Whenever he was on, you went to the chamber because you knew it was going to be compelling," he says. "He had such strength that people were scared of him. On the few occasions when I had to summon up the nerve to interrupt him, I did so knowing that I would be demolished. He was so sharp, he was almost unintermittible. Churchill would rehearse his speeches and try them out on people before committing them to memory," he says. "Nobody has time for that any more. Now it's all about soundbites."

Sorting through some old manifestos in the memorabilia section, he chuckles over one proclaiming *Fifty Reasons To*

Vote Labour. "We managed to reduce that to five at the last election." There are old posters, which he collects, photographs and cartoons which he would like but can't afford. "There was a brilliant photograph of Harold Wilson here the other day, but it was over £100, which is outside my price range."

It is not only books that Mitchell buys. At his constituency office, the staff drink their coffee out of remastered 1992 election commemorative mugs hopefully proclaiming "Neil Kinnock - The Winner." The MP has also bought a "Demon Eyes" tie.

Despite the profusion of amusing and contemporary items in the shop - including *Spitting Image* magnets - it does not seem to attract the younger generation of politi-

cians today, Mitchell says sadly. "I don't know why it is, but they don't seem to have the same interest in the history of politics. They see themselves in a social-service role rather than as controllers of the nation's destiny. And it's such a harassed age now that they don't have time to absorb the political past or read that much about it."

He started in television and rose to become one of Neil Kinnock's front bench team, only to be dropped in 1989 for taking a part-time job with Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV as co-presenter of the political debating show *Target*.

"A sensible party would have allowed me to carry on with some television work," he

shrugs. "Obviously, it was disappointing at the time. The motivation for any politician is to become a Minister. Power is the aphrodisiac."

"But it wouldn't have made any difference if I had dedicated myself to climbing the ladder. Like all the other Labour oddies, I would have been swept away by New Labour. So there would have been no point in virtue as it turned out."

He is happy now to settle into his role as a garrulous, entertaining and not always politically correct backbench MP, Eurosceptic and anti-Brussels Dome cynic. He is happy enough with the daily grind of constituency politics, and adds: "The fun is being on the clattering train, as Beaverbrook used to say. If you're not on the clattering train where are you? The answer is, probably dead. And when that happens, I'm going to have my body preserved and Iain can sell it. I would be very happy lying in state at Politico's."

Politico's, 8 Artillery Row, London SW1P 1RZ (0171-528 0010), Open Mon-Fri 9am-6.30pm, Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 11am-4pm.

SHOP WATCH

■ **Avant Garden**, a shop dedicated to chic "architectural" garden items and furniture, never disappoints. Look out for its armchair-topiary frame, camellia pots and twirly wire candle holders. Call 0171-229 4408 for mail order, or visit the shop at 77 Ledbury Road, London W11.

■ Fashion houses are desperate to include quirky homewares. Browns' minimalist new space offers the likes of silk velvet albums, burning sticks and gold leather pouffes, at Shop 26, South Molton Street, London W1 (0171-491 7833). Whistles' 12 Christopher Place shop, off Oxford Street, has tempting one-offs to explore, like silvery plates and charcoal pyjamas. Call 0171-487 4484 for details.

■ Classic yet trendy, simply cut jenkins, pinafores or stove-pipe trousers, in no-nonsense moleskin and flannel, can be found at Old Town's shop at 32 Elm Hill, Norwich, or ordered by post. Clothes are made to order, though not to measure. Call 01603 628100 for a catalogue, price £1.50.



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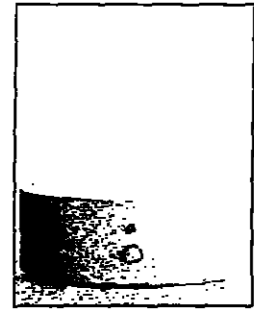
■ The White Company, mecca of the best white bed linens for mail-order devotees, has now launched cot sets and single bed sizes for style-conscious children of all ages. Parents will be relieved to note its new daisy and train-embroidered linens are pretty enough to oust cartoon duvets for good. Get the spring '98 catalogue on 0171-385 7988.

■ UPDATE: Osborne & Little's grand sale of fabrics and wallpapers, including surplus stock, seconds and discontinued lines, is at Battersea Town Hall from March 4-7. Call 0181-675 2255 for details. French Connection wannabes have a kids' store from next week. Find the spotty collection at 44 Kings Road, London, SW3 (0171-225 3302).

■ Just one trip to Celestial Buttons and your plain white shirts will never be the same again. Toby Pearce's emporium has buttons to inspire, from hallmarked sterling silver through to glass stars, diamanté to horn. Prices start from a humble 5p. Send a fabric swatch, and he will source buttons to match, or will customise outfits on site. Find the shop at 54 Cross Street, London N1 (0171-226 4766).

JUDITH WILSON

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FOR those decking out a nursery, the Auto Fade Light (above) is ideal for the cot. Made from frosted white plastic, it measures 7in by 7in and is operated by two touch-sensitive buttons: one a regular dimmer switch, the other a timer that dims the light slowly to off over 15 minutes.

TIM WAPSHOTT
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my favourite shop

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CHANGING TIMES

Are you sitting comfortably?

Pouffes were once viewed as the poor relation of the furniture world and stools as the refuge of people on the pick-up in bars but they have both made a quiet comeback to become must-have items for the modern home.

Light and easily transportable, stools take up much less space than a conventional chair and are perfect for small flats or any sort of pared-down, trendy pad. What's more, they can often be designed to adjust in height, to stack or to double up as small tables or storage spaces. The poor old pouffe, also known as

STOOLS

a pouff, has, on the other hand, become increasingly hard to find in the shops. It was a different story in the Fifties, when they were all the rage as TV seats and footstools. They fell from grace in the Seventies and Eighties but a few brave designers are soldiering on, producing contemporary pouffes with fashion-fabric coverings, while the British Furniture Manufacturers' Association says: "They could become the PlayStation pouffe of the Nineties." Well, you never know.

KATHERINE SORRELL

ABOVE: Ikea's "Ur" stool, £39, is tricky to fit together but the padded top is pleasant to sit on, and the curvy steel base gives it a space-age, modern look (0181-208 5600)

ABOVE: Birch-ply modernist stool, £79, from David Mellor (0171-730 4259)

ABOVE: Ocean's Venetian folding stool/table, £59, in solid birch is pretty but hard to fold/unfold. Matching cushions are available, at £13.95 (0800 132985)

ABOVE: Gittery rubberised pouffe by Squigee (0141-534 0661) costs from £175 (other fabrics available). It's full of impact and soft but also supportive. Also available from The Furniture Union (0171-287 3424)

RIGHT: Very low, but surprisingly comfortable, this Ghanaian Ashanti stool bears a hand-carved symbol of goodwill in its base. Made of medium hardwood from a managed resource, some of these stools are buried after completion to give them an "antique" appearance. It costs about £100 (0181-903 0571)

RIGHT: There's a deceptive simplicity about these beautifully made "Stool-Shelves", by Azumi, £353 each. Made of solid maple and powder-coated steel, they are wonderfully ingenious, doubling as good-looking seating and nifty stacking storage. From Haus (0171-255 2557)

ABOVE: Fingo swivel stool from Ikea (0181-208 5600) is excellent value at £21. Flat-packed but incredibly easy to assemble

Don't fit in?

The Samaritans
0345 90 90 90

Photographs by Des Jenson

صكنا من الاجمل

Pick'n'mix from the global bazaar

Open any design-led magazine and you will be bombarded with trans-global images. Flat-roofed houses filled with kilims, wooden carvings and beaded ornaments; plates piled with exotic fruit and spices; bars decorated with ethnic prints, serving cocktails with unpronounceable names. No culture is safe, it seems, from the magpie Western consumer in search of fresh ideas — and no national costume unexploited by fashion designers.

Couturiers have always been inspired by exotic cultures — by the Ballets Russes in the early part of this century, by Arabic turbans in the Twenties, Nehru jackets in the Sixties, Mao jackets and mandarin collars in the Seventies. Today's look is not about taking from one culture exclusively, but melding bits of each — Native American feathers with Guatemalan peasant fabrics and African beads.

For this season, designers have used foreign elements that blend with their own styles. Issey Miyake produced a one-shouldered long dress reminiscent of both a Buddhist robe and a sari; Kenzo a bandage-like wrap top worn with ethnic beads; Etro sarong skirts; Anna Sui Indian-looking embroidered dresses. The styling, too, was varied: Japanese hairpieces pinned up with African pins; Native American plaits decorated with Arabic ribbons; Zulu beads worn with Björk-style buns.

The trick to wearing this look every day is, according to Carole Robb, design director of Monsoon, to keep it simple. "Team a printed sarong or drawstring trousers with a simple singlet," she advises. Or just raid your wardrobe for every ethnic thing you own, and mix them liberally. At last, it is time to go native.

LISA GRAINGER



ABOVE: Deep-purple velvet wrap coat, £694, Idol, 15 Ingestre Place, W1 Liberty, W1 (0171-439 8537). Multicoloured line bead choker, £1,645, Koh Samui, 65 Monmouth Street, WC2 (0171-240 4260). Pale-pink cotton and silk mix finely embroidered scarf (used as headscarf), £580, Etro, 14 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-495 5767)

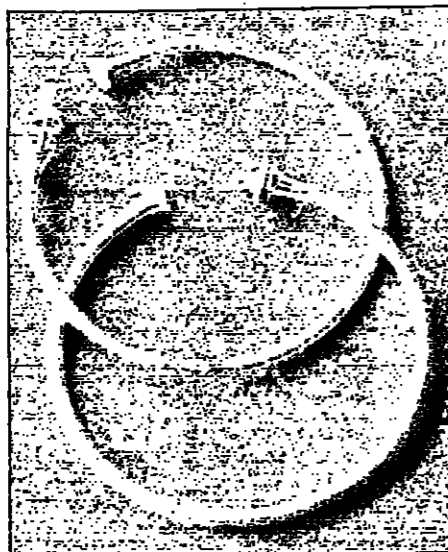


ABOVE LEFT: Stone linen silver-embroidered waistcoat, £345; suede wrap-over dress, £695, Mulberry, 41-42 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 3900). Chocolate cotton and silk fringe scarf, £160, Etro, as right. Silver and wooden square bead necklace, £123; matching hairpins, £83, Helene Rohner, Fenwicks, New Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 1961). Cream raffia bag, £9.99, Accessorize branches nationwide (0171-313 3000). Brown leather flat strappy sandals, £24.99, Office, 55 South Molton Street, W1 (0181-838 4447)

ABOVE RIGHT: Burnt orange silk embroidered waistcoat, £60, Monsoon, Kensington High Street, W8, and selected branches (0171-313 3000). Chocolate double-layer chiffon dress, £45, Warehouse, 93 King's Road, SW3 (0171-278 3491). Stone jersey silk wide-leg trousers, £95, Dries Van Noten, Harvey Nichols, SW1 (0171-235 5000). Burnt orange scarf, £62, Etro, as before. Large wooden necklace, from £79, Mulberry, as above (to order: 0171-491 3900). Bronze leather T-bar mules, £24.99, Office, as above

THREE OF A KIND

Hooped gold or silver earrings are simple and striking, yet blend in well with the highly patterned ethnic look. LG



ABOVE: Fine silver flat-effect hoop earrings, £85, Wright & Teague, Jess James, 3 Newburgh Street, W1 (0171-336 6633)



ABOVE: Large gold drop ball hoop earrings, £120, Slim Barrett, Liberty, W1 (0171-354 9993)



LEFT: Silver weave-effect hoop earrings, £22, Agatha, 4 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-495 2779)

Photographs by Carol Cawley



ABOVE: Silk Mongolian lamb-lined waistcoat, £195, Dosa, Browns, 23-27 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-491 7823). Chocolate chiffon tie-front dress, £310, Dries Van Noten, as above left. Silver and wood necklace, as above left

LEFT: Chocolate suede-like multicoloured buttoned shirt, £228, Idol, as above. Red leaf-print vest, £49, C.P. Company (0171-267 6767). Beige and chocolate tribal striped skirt, £55, Monsoon, as above left. Multicoloured fine bead and leather bracelet, £585, Koh Samui, as above

Hair and make-up by Sally Kvalheim for Jo Hanston (0171-495 7774) Styling by Amandip Uppal Model: Eva

THE DRINKS
THAT TIME FORGOT

Between the Sheets

The two most critical factors at play with the fate of any cocktail seem to be its name and its "base". The current vogue is very much for the white spirits and against the innuendo which, on both counts, leaves the rum-based Between the Sheets hung out to dry.

This is a shame, because this delightful old swinger has been making girls giggle for much of this weary century. The Sidecar, from which it derives, was created by Harry at Harry's New York bar in Paris after the First World War for an eccentric army captain who would turn up, chauffeur-driven, in a motorcycle sidecar.

The Between the Sheets appears to have been first mixed in the West Indies, probably in the 1930s. Both cocktails blend Cointreau with brandy and lemon juice, although in addition to its white rum base, the Between the Sheets employs the lemon more as a modifier than a true ingredient. (Triple sec can be used in place of the Cointreau.) The glass will also benefit from a dusting of the rim with powdered sugar.

The first time you heard the phrase "politically correct" was probably the last time you

The traditional high street curry house may soon be a distant memory, says Rohan Daft

One waiter glowered at me as if I had just run over his dog; the other looked as though he intended to serve it up for dinner. It was not the warmest greeting I had ever received in an Indian restaurant but, according to my dining companion Iqbal Wahhab, editor-in-chief of *Tandoori*, the trade magazine of Britain's 8,000 Indian restaurants, it is not untypical.

Mr Wahhab, 34, enraged the nation's Indian waiters (whose number he estimates at about 25,000) by labelling them "miserable git" in the current issue of his magazine. "Walk into an Indian restaurant, no matter how posh," he writes, "and more likely than not, you will be 'greeted' by a miserable git. It's as if his day's been ruined by your arrival."

Mr Wahhab's musings attracted a barrage of damning telephone calls and letters and to his being barred from at least one Indian restaurant. Letters of indignation have been fired off to newspapers (this one included) and the matter was chewed over by Radio 4's *The Food Programme*. In reply, Mr Wahhab has apologised to the Bangladeshi Caterers' Association, the majority of Indian restaurants here are run by Bangladeshis and the Guild of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs. He has even discussed opening a school to train Indian waiters.

Lunch with Mr Wahhab proved a little difficult to organise for a man whose stock-in-trade is Indian catering. He is reluctant to comment on restaurants individually but our anonymous West London venue was the perfect stage, offering the standard Anglo-Indian fare in the standard flock wallpaper surroundings. He ate chicken tikka followed by chicken karahi, while I chose onion bhajee and chicken tikka masala. For some years now, the latter has been the most popular dish in the country. "My point," says Mr Wahhab, "was that Indian restaurant waiters need to improve their levels of service because customers need to have more reasons to go to Indian restaurants now. Owners need to invest in their waiters more. In *Tandoori* magazine, I have regularly looked at ways in which Indian restaurants can improve their image, their decor and their cuisine. This time I



Iqbal Wahhab: "A survey last year found that fewer people were going to their local curry house after the pub"

Cheer up, stop fawning
have the Raj behind

MISERABLE GITTS AT THE CURRY SHOP
Wahhab roasts by Tandoori mag

Headlines in Tandoori magazine that spelt trouble

CURRY HOUSE INFORMATION

Iqbal Wahhab's tips for getting the best out of your local Indian restaurant:

- Ask for the "staff curry", made fresh every day.
- Choose karahi (a small steel pot) dishes. They do not contain the "one-pot masala" sauce.
- Avoid fruit in curries. It is likely to be tinned and anyway it is not authentic.
- Drink Indian lager with your meal.

looked at service. I used extreme language to get the point across and as a result I caused a fuss. I have apologised, but don't confuse my rudeness with the issue at stake here."

The issue is the future not of the "posh" Indian restaurants such as London's E30-plus-a-head Tamarind and Chutney

Mary that were included in his attack, but of the high street curry house, the majority of which have hardly changed since the first few opened in the 1950s. As well as surly waiters, Mr Wahhab wants to see the back of laminated menus the size of telephone directories, flock wallpaper and a background accompaniment of looped James Last on a sitar.

But maybe his urgings are encouraging people to do away with what has become a comfortable, affordable and much-loved British institution. Considering the traditional post-pub chicken vindaloo crowd, at least, Indian waiters have probably got enough on their plates without being attacked by him as well.

Mr Wahhab is convinced that Indian restaurants either move upmarket or die. "The more people go to upmarket Indian restaurants, the more they will expect from their high street curry houses. A survey last year found that for the first time fewer people were going to Indian restau-

rants after the pub. A lot of high street curry houses are now closing at 10.30pm instead of 11.30pm. If people are becoming more discerning about Indian food, then what are they being offered?"

What was being offered at the restaurant where we were lunching, and at most of the 8,000 other high street curry houses around the country, is something that has not changed for years. The decor, according to Mr Wahhab, was typical: "A curious mix of the mosque and the pub. It's what Bangladeshis thought the English thought of India."

The menu was typical, too: "It's the one-pot masala, an all-encompassing sauce for various different dishes. If you want a chicken madras, it will have some extra chilli powder; a vindaloo will get two extra spoons of chilli powder; and a chicken tikka masala will get some cream. You can cook 200 different dishes with that one pot."

My own chicken tikka masala was a luminous terracotta in colour, a little cloying, but perfectly acceptable all the same. And the service was friendly and efficient. Mr Wahhab, politely declared both his chicken tikka and his chicken karahi "fine", but added that he did not think he would be returning.

Indeed, if his predictions for the high street curry house turn out to be correct, the chances are that he will not be able to return even if he wants to. Sadly, the curry house might soon be all but extinct. "There is a pub opening soon with an Indian restaurant in it," he says. "They plan to create a national chain."

Do not expect to find Mr Wahhab patronising such places, though. Later this year he will be putting his money where his mouth is and opening his own Indian restaurant in Kensington High Street, West London. "It is the ultimate high street curry house on the ultimate high street," he says. And far that, you will have to pay £45 a head.

Drink



Jane MacQuitty
Rhône reds should be consistently impressive, but even a good vintage pales beside the Languedoc

By rights this should be the Rhône's year. Everyone is fed up with Bordeaux's high prices and there will never be enough good domaines bottled burgundy to go round. So those plentiful, sensibly priced and rich, spicy red Rhône should be just right to see in the spring.

The Rhône, too, has had a great run of vintages of late. The big, bold 1995s are so concentrated and fat with fruit that Rhône merchants all agree it is a great year. And although it is too early to say yet, 1997 could be in the same exceptional league. Don't be sniffy, either, about buying the best Rhône estate wines early on, when they are still in barrel, as plan-aheaders do with the finest bordeaux and burgundy. Top-drawer 1996 Rhône, another excellent harvest just behind the superb 1994s, are being launched now and you will need to move fast to snap them up.

The Wine Society has almost sold out of its 1996 Rhône offer and Bibendum's tickets for its 1996 Rhône tasting evening in a fortnight have all gone. But telephone early on March 16 and you can buy the wines, albeit blind (0171-916 7706). Justin & Brooks will post its 1996 offer soon, so contact 0171-493 8721 for a copy.

I feel almost as enthusiastic, so far, about the 1996 Rhône as I do about the 1996 burgundy vintage. The best have a similarly mouthwatering acidity, underpinned by lots of juicy red and black fruit. This is an elegant and restrained Rhône year, as opposed to the blood and thunder variety that takes for ever to soften and mature. All the better, then, to drink rather than cellar.

Last year's *Times* Top 100 Wines series reflected this tasty 1996 vintage quality, with a clutch of the lesser Rhône reds winning through. Try Marks & Spencer's hearty, yet velvety 1996 La Tour du Pré, Côte de Ventoux, a typical southern Rhône mix of grenache, cinsault, syrah and mourvèdre, a £4.99 snip and even Asda's 1996 Côte du Rhône Aged in Oak priced at £3.99, full of bramble and black pepper.

However, not everything in the vast back garden of the Rhône is looking rosy. This time last year I wrote sadly about the dire quality of generic Côte du Rhône and Côte du Rhône villages. In the intervening 12 months there has been a slight rise in quality, due principally to the fine 1996 vintage. But the Rhône prob-



heard a *Between the Sheets* being ordered. Given the complexity of flavours, it is a wonder the drink succeeded. The light rum would originally have been Cuban. However, since the revolution, "Cuban" rum tends to originate elsewhere in the Caribbean. Cointreau balances the other ingredients and allows the rum to blend with the lemon juice. Then there is the cognac. Any pretensions to modesty with which the evening began will soon be dissipated.

Having eased countless seductions from the Jazz Age to the 1980s, the drink could hardly be expected to survive the onslaught of AIDS, let alone the po-faced solemnity of a government that bans unpasteurised milk and beef on the bone.

And yet the smooth old route still seems to wink from the grave: "Go on, you know you want to"

KATE STRONACH

EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES

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The easy way to peel, store and crush garlic

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The garlic peeler and the garlic machine from the American designer David Holcomb are two superb kitchen gadgets for anyone who likes to prepare fresh garlic and have it ready for use at a moment's notice.

The garlic peeler is very easy to use. Simply drop a fresh clove into its jaws, give a quick squeeze of the handle and the peeled garlic is ejected out of the bottom.

The garlic machine stores about eight freshly peeled cloves. To fill, unscrew the bottom, fill up with garlic, and screw back on. Then twist the handle clockwise to press

out the garlic through the small holes in the bottom. Snap on the cup and store in the refrigerator for use again later.

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HENRY HARRIS'S CHEAT OF THE WEEK

DURING THE past five years we have seen a rapid growth in the range of flavoured olives. Once they could be bought only in the Italian deli but now they are everywhere and, it seems, marinated in just about anything. However, they all have one thing in common: a price hike in comparison to the simpler variety in brine.

Considering the popularity of olives, we know little about them and think of them as fruit on a tree. The Romans were such olive fanatics that they would start a meal with them and then finish the meal with yet more.

In the green state, olives are young and require a long brining and washing in an alcohol solution to remove their bitterness. When left on the tree for longer, they ripen further. They still need treating with an alcohol solution to remove the bitterness, but the brining is not so important.

Finally, if left to ripen further they are then ready for pressing. There are some delightful little jars of goat's and sheep's cheeses flavoured with olives but if you make them



yourself, your friends will remark on how fine they are. Cheating is not just about saving time or effort but about getting the best out of things.

Take feta cheese, for example, and by feta I mean the genuine Greek stuff and not a Danish or French imitation. Take a 250gm block and put it into a polythene bag. In a separate bowl combine six tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil with a crushed clove of garlic, a pinch of dried chilli flakes and some good quality oregano. Tip this mixture into the bag and expel as much of the air as possible, seal the bag

with a twist and store in the fridge for at least four days.

Using the bag method means you do not have to waste the marinating ingredients. After four days, the cheese is ready to use. Instead of the usual Greek salad, try it crumbled over cold baked broccolini with a little chopped red onion, lemon juice and stoned black olives.

To marinate the olives, take 250g of black olives in brine, drain them and, using the bag method, add a splash of olive oil, half a lemon cut into thin slices, three bashed cloves of garlic and three tablespoons of dry sherry. Likewise, store for four days. These marinades are only a guide; adding other herbs and seasonings can create wonderful results.

Finally, instead of taking chocolates or wine round to friends, sterilise a small kilner jar and fill it with one of your own olive blends — although if you do this you will need to increase the quantity of olive oil.

And don't let this olive oil go to waste — it makes a great marinade for grilled meat, fish or vegetables.

STAR BUYS

1996 The Milton Vineyard, Gisborne Chardonnay, limited stock, Seafwy, down £2 to £5.99 from Monday until March 28

1996 Meursault, Latour-Giraud, limited stock, Seafwy, down £5 to £10.99 from Monday until March 28

JAMES and Annie Milton's organic vineyards at Poverly Bay, on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island, have produced a stellar series of barrel fermented whites. And although this smoky '96 with lots of herby fruit and a long, lingering, butterscotch-scented finish is not their finest vintage, it is good for £5.99. Best with food, to cushion its dry, nutty taste.

1996's white burgundy vintage qualities to make it a good buy. Plenty of nutty, herbaceous fruit with the classic leaf green, cabbagey finish of a mature, ready-to-drink white burgundy. Again, soften it by drinking with food.

BEST OF THE REST

Seafwy trounces the opposition this month. Apart from the star buys of the week above, go for Seafwy's 1996 California Oak Aged Chardonnay from Fetzer, or its 1996 Australian Oaked Chardonnay from Hardy, both down £1 to £3.99. And for March celebrations such as Cheltenham and the Boat Race, stock up with Seafwy's Spanish Cava, down £1 to £3.99.

حکذا من الاصل



The Times Cook

Lisbon's hosting of Expo 98, planned for May, provides the perfect excuse to sample the best of Portuguese cuisine

With Expo 98 in May, Lisbon becomes one of the focal points of Europe...

well executed, and not to be missed is the house sweet, Conventual...

- ginginha, the not-too-sweet Morello cherry liqueur, is the perfect digestif... Stuffed squid Serves 4...



Frances Bissell

Tip the squid into a colander in the sink and rinse them. Hold the body of a squid in one hand and pull the head off...



Remove and discard any piping from the liver and cut into finger-size pieces...

layer. Pour the wine over and trickle the rest of the olive oil on top...

I LEARNED to cook the next dish after enjoying it on one of our first visits to Lisbon...

- lacas (Lisbon liver) Serves 4 500g lamb's liver, in a piece 150ml extra virgin olive oil...

Remove and discard any piping from the liver and cut into finger-size pieces...

THE PERFECT FISH CAKE

Packed with good things

MUCH as I enjoy eating them in a Lisbon bar at noon, I cannot get excited enough about croquettes to cook them myself...

FOR EACH fish cake, you need equal proportions of flaked fish and dry mashed potatoes...

METHOD: Mix together in a bowl and, if you wish, add some very finely chopped fresh parsley...

TO SERVE: With tomato sauce, pesto, parsley or egg sauce...

NEXT WEEK: The perfect mussels

corners and bake in a pre-heated oven at 150C, gas mark 3, for about 30 minutes...

Spread a sheet of greaseproof paper on a worktop and sift with icing sugar...

Restaurants in Lisbon: Café 331, Café Cofe, Rua de Cavalls, 57, 1300 Lisboa...

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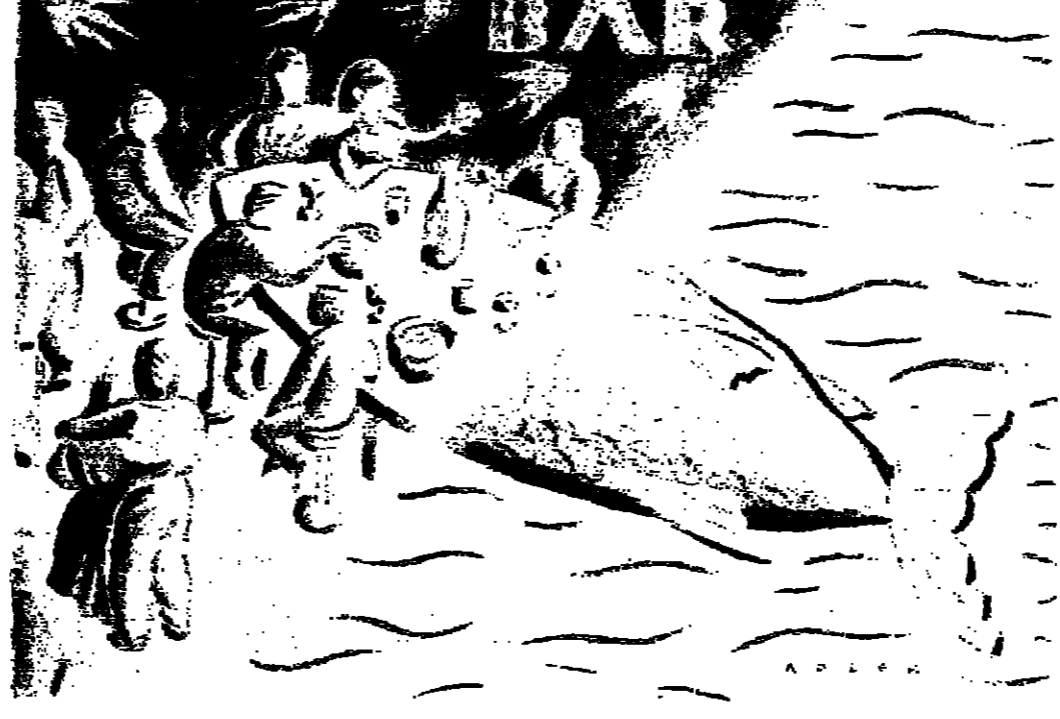
Restaurants in Lisbon: Café 331, Café Cofe, Rua de Cavalls, 57, 1300 Lisboa...

Restaurants in Lisbon: Café 331, Café Cofe, Rua de Cavalls, 57, 1300 Lisboa...



restaurant with a café-bar downstairs. The chef, Victor Sobral, uses the flavours, scents, flowers, herbs and ingredients of Portugal...

All the places mentioned are excellent, but there is one where we always go on arriving in Lisbon, the bar at Gambirinus...



- Sweet egg roll Serves 8 4 large free-range eggs 150-180g sugar 2tsp flour Zest of a lemon, finely grated

Crack the eggs into a large bowl. Mix the dry ingredients and then add them to the eggs. Beat until pale and thick.

CONSUMING INTERESTS: MUSTARD

When does a commodity command a premium price? When it becomes a gift. Mustard, essentially stuff for disguising the off-flavours of iffy sausages and burgers...



Shaken Oak Mustard with Herbs, £22 for 12 170g jars, from Shaken Oak Farm, Old North Leigh Lane, Hatley, Woking, Surrey GU24 0XZ (01932 868398).

Claims: "A mild mustard, gluten free, a quality product, hand-made on the farm."

Verdict: A dullard. Dark little globules and nothing of any great note in flavour. Not one I shall return to. *

Tesco Finest Sweet Mustard Sauce, £1.19 for 200g. Claims: "Recommended by Chef Anton Edelmann." Best Before End (BBE) Feb 99.

Verdict: Honey-coloured and creamy-textured, uncuous but too sweet and insufficiently piquant. **

Cottage Cooking Horseradish Mustard Relish, £1.59 for 195g, not including p&p, from CCL Foods, Earls Colne Business Park, Earls Colne, Essex CO6 2NS (01877 222250).

Claims: "Prepared to an exclusive country recipe." BBE Jan 99.

Verdict: Sulphurous yellow colour. Viscous texture. The horseradish flavour outgins the mustard, but it went well with cold beef. **

Heaven Secret Herb and Spice Mustard Whole Grain Tomato and Basil Mustard, £1.80 for 165g, not including p&p, from Pound Cottage, Pound Lane, Bristford, Essex, Devon EX6 7LR (01847 252847).

Claims: None, except that it

Verdict: Good, grainy appearance. The flavour is direct and clear. ****

Sainsbury's Special Selection English Wholegrain Mustard, £1.50 for 170g. Claims: Use as a condiment to meats, sausages, pies and strong cheeses...

Verdict: Good, grainy appearance. The flavour is direct and clear. ****

Waitrose English Mustard, 75p for 180g. Claims: BBE Sep 98.

Verdict: Poster-paint yellow colour but dry, powdery texture. Delivers a tongue-numbing direct punch, so treat with caution. Good with pies, ham and sausages. Useless in vinaigrette. ****

A and M Johnson Garlic and Black Pepper Honey Mustard, £1.40 for 170g, not including p&p, from Grasmead, Dean, Bishops Cleeve, Gloucestershire SO32 1PY (01499 892390).

Claims: None. BB April 99.

Verdict: Murky, off-putting appearance, fusty smell and the flavour of pepper dominating the mustard. No star.

Burghams Mustard Hot English Mustard, 99p for 190g, not including p&p, from Wilkin and Sons, Tiptree, Essex CO5 0RE. Claims: None, except that it

Verdict: Good, grainy appearance. The flavour is direct and clear. ****

An unstoppable hunger

Martin Johnson, England's giant forward, has always had a healthy appetite, says Joe Warwick

HOME COOKING

Martin Johnson's Welsh opponents in the line-out last Saturday must have occasionally gazed up at his towering frame and asked themselves through gritted teeth what exactly his mother fed him as a child...



Eye on the ball: Johnson captaining the British Lions. Left: above, a champion footballer when he was a schoolboy



looking for curries and spaghetti. "They'd be more likely to eat a hunk of cheese than a bar of chocolate." Martin's favourite meal was "pork chops, chips and peas and when in doubt call the pizza man".

MORE FOOD & DRINK IN the times magazine

Alex O'Connell finds an island home for someone who wants to put the brakes on after a life in the fast lane



Gordon and Mandy Spice with their greyhound in the living room of Weir Point, which has views of Windsor Castle. They moved here because they "always wanted to live by the water"



The house has been transformed from a crumbling prefab



The master bedroom has wonderful views of the river



The dining room can seat 14 people comfortably

HOME SWAP

WIMBLEDON VILLAGE, with its Common, quaint shops and, of course, the All England Lawn Tennis Club, is one of southwest London's most expensive suburbs. You might pick up a two-bedroom flat up the hill for £200,000, but most homes cost a great deal more. Red-brick Victorian mansions overlooking the Common are highly sought-after, priced from £700,000, following gains of up to 25 per cent last year, according to estate agent Hamptons. Waterside properties in Cornwell, particularly on the south coast around the Helford River and the Fal Estuary, and on the north coast around Rock, are popular with second-home buyers. Expect to pay a premium of 100 per cent for waterfrontage, at least £400,000 to £600,000 for a five to six-bedroom period house, after price rises of up to 20 per cent last year, according to Jackson-Stops & Staff.

The area around Market Bosworth in West Leicestershire, with its unspoilt villages, including Sheepy Magna, is popular with commuters from Birmingham looking for family homes. Five-bedroom Georgian village houses can be had from £250,000; detached four-bedroom cottages from £150,000. Country houses with up to 12 acres start at £450,000. Knight Frank says prices went up 10 per cent last year, but are still 15 per cent cheaper than South Warwickshire, which attracts London buyers.



This three-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment in an imposing building on Wimbledon's prestigious Parkside, overlooking the Common, has a price tag of £440,000, including a share of the freehold (Hamptons, 0181-846 0081).



For a little more you can buy Danescombe Valley, a Grade II listed waterside hotel fronting the river Tamise, at Cullstock near Tavistock, Cornwall. It has six bedrooms with ensuite baths, four reception rooms, terraced gardens and a slipway (Jackson-Stops & Staff, 01392 214222).



A similar sum will buy The Grange, a Grade II listed Victorian village house in 12 acres of gardens, paddocks and pastureland, at Sheepy Magna, on the Leicestershire/Warwickshire border. It comes with six first-floor bedrooms, six second-floor rooms, three reception rooms and a self-contained one bedroom flat (Knight Frank, 01789 297735).

FLATS

The Samaritans
0345 90 90 90

You too could live in Spiceworld

Gordon Spice, the former Formula 2 racing driver, four-time winner of Driver of the Year and three-time Team of the Year champion for the Guild of Motoring Drivers, is the original fast-living lad. If status were judged by the editorial team of *Loaded* magazine, dependent on a man's handling of cars with extra points for whisky and cigarette consumption, Mr Spice would have no competition.

In the past 20 years of serial speeding and near smash hits, Mr Spice has had the luxury of knowing that when the *Tar-mac* has cooled, the leather bodysuits unzipped and the champagne flowing, he could zoom home to Weir Point, the Berkshire island home he created with his wife Mandy, and take his boat out on the Thames.

But the couple's lifestyle has changed. Mr Spice retired from motor racing in 1989 and from his cash and carry business in 1990. Now, after many happy years in their wood-clad, dormer-windowed house on Ham Island, Windsor, the Spices are on the move — at a more leisurely pace than at his 230mph-plus record.

Weir Point is on the market for £1 million. "We plan to spend four months of the year in Zimbabwe and buy a smaller place in Hampshire," says Mrs Spice.

There are reasons for leaving the area. She admits that "the girls in the supermarket often ask me if I'm Posh Spice's mother, which is infuriating".

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

It is unlikely that Posh's real mum would have put up with the crumbling prefab that the Spices first lived in.

The council told the young couple that they could improve but not develop the building, which meant that rather than knocking it down and starting from scratch, they had to build around it. This meant 18 months of camping out without furniture amid crumbling walls. "It was like living on a submarine, but it was worth it," Mrs Spice says. "We always wanted to live near the water."

The work completed, Weir Point is now a comfortable family home. The sitting room, with its picture windows, soft sofas and arresting portraits, is the centre of the house. A heavy drinks cabinet in the middle of the sitting room is well stocked with liqueurs. "It looks Jacobean, but we bought it in Birmingham for £20," Mr Spice says.

The Spices' office is at the front of the house and is home to his silver trophies. Mr Spice is a keen birdwatcher and a sophisticated pair of binoculars sit on a desk.

The walls are lined with car posters and the shelves heave with model cars that wouldn't be out of place in the bedroom of a 13-year-old boy. Then you realise that Mr Spice designed the cars and is pictured in one photograph sitting in one of them with a Seventies shaggy-cut hairstyle, grinning like a madman, hands clasped to the wheel.

Fourteen people can sit comfortably around the table in the dining room. After the meal, guests can retire up stairs to the games room, pick up a cue and challenge each other to a game of snooker. This bright room, with pine floors and skylights, is ideal for a bit of late night potting. Some guests might prefer to



Mr Spice was a Formula 2 racing driver and four-time winner of the Driver of the Year

MARKET COMMENT

ALTHOUGH the name conjures up images of grand properties, Windsor has little to offer in the way of large houses with land. Not only are houses in the town centre limited in size, but the area is hedged in by Crown property.

Nonetheless, it is the starting point for many buyers looking for the attractive combination of a semi-rural existence with high accessibility (in the shape of the M4, M3 and M25, plus Heathrow).

Most of those who start their search in town end up heading out towards Sunningdale, Virginia Water and Englefield Green, where there is a concentration of higher-value properties. The alternative is to go west, to pleasant commuter villages such as Falely Street, Shurlock Row and Waltham St Lawrence.

This is a highly desirable area: three-bedroom period cottages cost £250,000 to £300,000. The larger properties with perhaps a staff cottage and several acres fetch more than £1.5 million and are in short supply. "There are far more at the top level in Surrey than in this part of the world."

Unsurprisingly, when the market was particularly active on the back of big City money in the first half of last year, it was these rare £1 million-plus houses which saw the greatest price increases.

GOOD properties at this level are much sought after, but it is the Thames which carries the big premium. Many of the Edwardian houses lining the riverbank between Windsor and Henley are worth £1 million and more — but don't expect value for money in terms of bricks and mortar.

Martin Chester, of Hamptons International in Maidenhead, estimates that river frontage pushes up a house's price by as much as 50 per cent, with the average premium about 33 per cent (so a £1 million house would cost £660,000 elsewhere).

Even those houses with a public towpath between the garden and the riverbank will cost 15-20 per cent more. "You need £500,000 for a reasonable property, and it won't be large," Mr Chester says, "but they are much in demand. We have a riverside register for buyers and some have been waiting for two years. They are very determined."

Agents: Hamptons International (01753 855555)



STANMORE HALL, in Middlesex, is bracing itself for an invasion of the paparazzi. No sooner had word emerged that Tom Cruise and his wife Nicole Kidman (above) have bought an £858,000 two-bedroom penthouse suite in the 19th-century mansion than *Titanic* heart-throb Leonardo DiCaprio snapped up a three-bedroom first-floor flat costing £900,000.

SMART MOVES

CORINTHIA WEST, a former girlfriend of Mick Jagger, is selling her Victorian artist's studio in Albert Bridge Road, SW1 (right). The house is one of several such studios on the road and, until eight years ago, a covenant decreed that they were for sale only to artists.

The journalist and 1960s icon is parting with a house which includes a double-height reception room, open-plan kitchen area and gallery bedroom.

Agent Douglas and Gordon is asking £350,000 for the freehold.

THE FORMER home of sculptor Alfred Turner, a double-fronted, detached Victorian house in Munster Road, Fulham, west London, built in the 1880s, is on sale for £550,000.

Kings George V and VI (right) visited the house during the 1930s to pose for profile portraits for the Royal Mint. The house has four bedrooms, several bathrooms and a roof terrace.



ONE OF the most luxurious hotels in the world, the Sandy Lane Hotel in Barbados, popular with supermodels and celebrities, is refurbishing its premises and building two luxury penthouses. It is thought that the Dermot Desmond, an investor in the project with an estimated £100 million fortune, will buy one of the new flats.

RACHEL KELLY

FAITH GLASGOW

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هكذا من الأصل

Fatal attraction of that country house



An open fire may have a romantic appeal, but heating a country house can be very expensive

Dreamers take note. New figures show the real running costs of that dream cottage or magical manor house. The average three-bedroom cottage costs £1,295 a year to run while a six-bedroom rectory runs up an annual bill of £21,000, according to new figures from the agents, Knight Frank.

Swept up in dreams of rose-covered bliss, townies who move to the country are often unaware of the hidden extra costs. These include comprehensive security, specialist restoration, huge heating bills and staff costs.

Rupert Sweeting, from the firm, says: "Most people calculate the cost of the moving van, furnishings and redecorating, but they sometimes forget the seemingly obvious fact that the bigger the house, the bigger the bills, especially in the country."

Basic expenses, such as lighting and heating, for country houses, far exceed those for the average town house, and effective security is more pressing for a house that may be empty much of the week.

The cottage bill comprises £500 a year for heating and lighting, £150 water rates, £500 council tax and £145 insurance. The need for staff is minimal: the size of the house does not warrant housekeepers, cooks or full-time cleaners.

However, buy a six-bedroom rectory on three to five acres, and you will be faced with annual staff wages of £1,800 for a cleaner and £2,200 for a gardener; £3,000 heating bills and £500 in high-tech security costs. General annual maintenance comes to over £6,000.

The owner of an eight-bedroom manor house with similar obligations might have to contend with annual costs of more than £43,000.

John German, from Chutons, notes that the wage bill for childcare can be especially expensive in the shires. "Families who have used an 'au pair share' in

Hidden costs, such as heating, security and restoration, can be a rude shock to those looking for their dream home in the country, writes Rachel Kelly

London may find that they have to employ a new nanny to take care of the children," he says. "This can amount to more than £10,000 in her salary and expenses each year which may well have to include a car."

The true cost of heating is another blind spot for buyers. Eileen Pinnegar owns Hammerwood Park in East Grinstead, West Sussex. The 50-room, Grade I listed Georgian house was built in 1792 by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, architectural adviser to Thomas Jefferson and the man who designed the White House in Washington.

Eileen and her husband, John, bought Hammerwood Park in 1982 as a shell without a roof. While they had budgeted for restoring the 50-room mansion, only now are they realising how difficult it is to heat such a house. Central heating has proved out of the question. "To heat a house this size would incur phenomenal costs," Mrs Pinnegar says. "Some of the rooms are more than 13 feet high — it would be like heating a void. One cannot expect to have modern standards of comfort in this sort of house. We have huge fireplaces and thick stone walls and we find that lighting a fire sufficiently warms the rooms."

"We close the internal shutters for added insulation and the stone walls actually absorb and retain

needed repairing in Georgian style. "The ceiling was covered with lime plaster — a feature of Georgian houses, and I wanted to repair it using similar materials," he says. "My idea was to 'like to replace like' and I invested in a specialist craftsman to do the job. It was more expensive than using a standard plasterer."

Likewise, Hilary Clare, former owner of the design company, Litchfield Clare, is restoring a three-bedroom Victorian house in Falmouth, Cornwall. Ms Clare says: "I am creating a breakfast room and was searching for reclaimed floorboards. I am now having to import walnut flooring from Italy which will cost more than I had expected."

Another blind spot can be the true cost of repairing roofs. Charles Ellingworth, a founding partner of Property Vision, says: "A large detached house in the country has about ten times more roof than the average London terraced house. In the winter months, one can leave a house in London to take care of itself as the neighbouring houses actually provide some warmth and protection from the elements. Leaving a house empty in the country can prove fatal — one can return to find pipes burst and frozen from the bad weather."

The ultimate money-saver is to buy a new house built in an old style. Graham Roper, chairman of the Berkeley Homes Group, says: "Buyers benefit from these new houses because running costs are far lower than in an original old property."

New homes have a high standard of insulation. They also have modern kitchens and bathrooms, so there is no need to carry out renovation work such as plumbing or rewiring."

Additional research by Romilly Kingsley-Golding.

'The basic expenses far exceed those for an average town house'

	MODERN	FARMHOUSE	MANOR HOUSE			
Lighting and Heating	£500	£600	£1,000	£1,650	£3,000	£4,000
Water rates	150	200	300	500	250	1,500
Council tax	550	700	900	1,050	1,050	1,375
Security	0	0	100	500	500	1,500
Insurance	145	200	650	900	875	2,000
Staff costs	0	1,500	2,500	3,500	3,500	28,000
Annual maintenance	1,000	none (for first 2 yrs)	2,250	5,000	9,000	15,500
Total average annual costs	2,345	3,200	7,700	13,100	18,175	53,875

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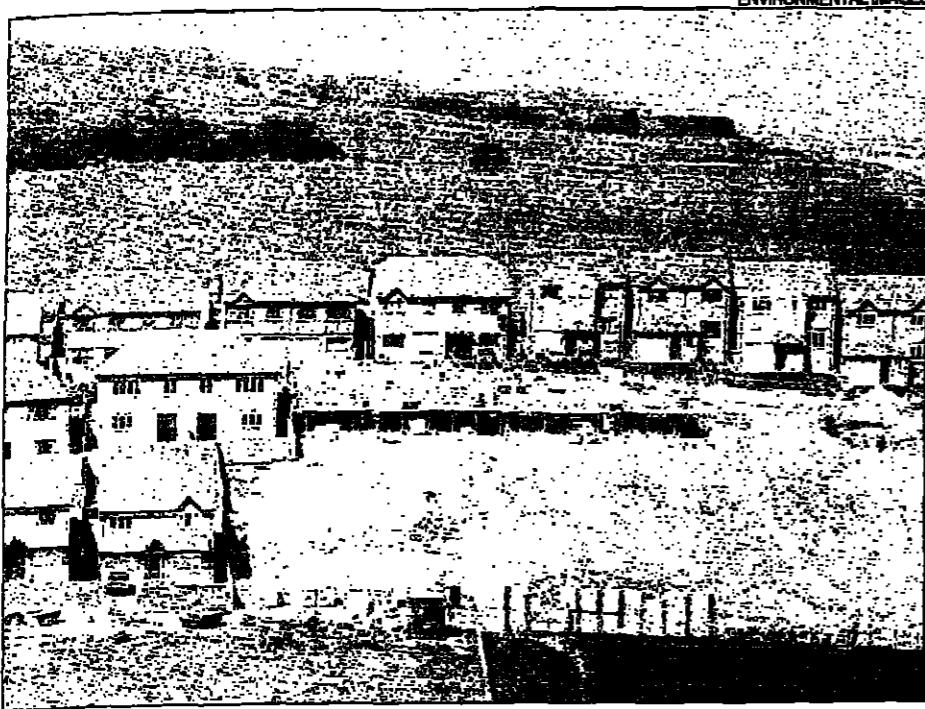
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John Prescott has decided that new homes must be built in towns and cities. Rachel Kelly assesses the implications



Improving urban areas could ease the demand for new housing on greenfield sites

Green light for brown sites in town

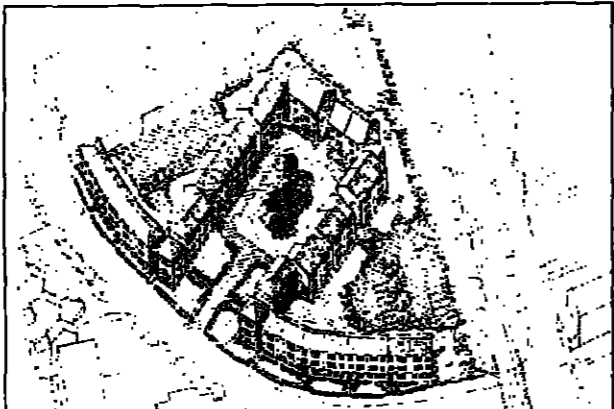
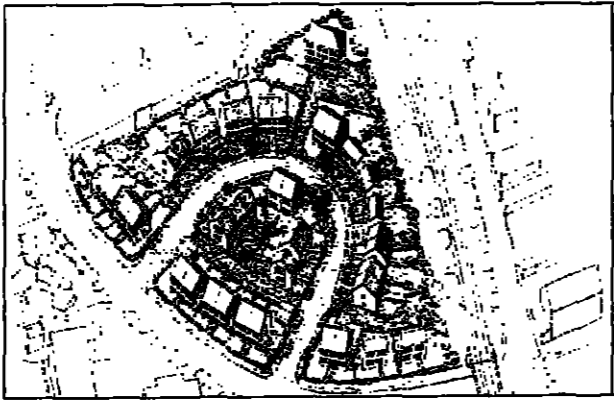
The Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott this week promised that in future housing development would be tilted towards urban rather than greenfield sites. It was time, he said, for a renaissance in our towns; they must be made pleasant places to live and work. "Urban regeneration" is the key phrase for housing in the 1990s.

But the idea is hardly new. As early as 1844, Friedrich Engels dismissed the Manchester suburb of Hulme as being in a "miserable and dilapidated state, surrounded by filth." The area was first regenerated by the Victorians, who built terraced rows for the Irish immigrants flooding the cities.

Then in the 1960s, along with hundreds of other British cities, it was regenerated again, this time when the two-ups two-downs were razed in favour of high-rise tower blocks and low-level deck access flats.

In 1987, Margaret Thatcher said on the morning of her third general election victory: "We must do something about the inner cities." Since then, thanks to the patchwork of Government grants and programmes, millions of pounds of public and private money have been spent.

Manchester is the northern flagship of the Government's drive to regenerate Britain's inner cities. Most of the 1960s housing, including the blocks known as the Crescent, has already been demolished. The old red-brick terrace housing has returned, and what was once a place synonymous with violence and drugs is now



Three views of a developed site near a town centre. Top: current practice, houses in a traffic-heavy area; below, parking space is sacrificed for flats and green areas; right: parking is completely eliminated and Tube station added

described by Barbara McLoughlin, director of Moss Side and Hulme Partnership, as "an area where people want to live."

Ms McLoughlin says: "It used to be an exceptionally intimidating area. You didn't walk through it unless you had to. Now, people are moving in rapidly." More recent regeneration was kick-started by the IRA bomb that devastated much of

the city centre in June 1996. After a decline in the 1980s of city centre population, it is now rising again towards 400,000.

Success in Manchester has encouraged the Government, not least because of the dynamic partnership between the public and private sectors.

"Co-operation between authorities and the private sector is essential for a successful urban regeneration," says

David Utting from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation housing charity.

The Department of Transport, Environment and the Regions has consulted planning experts Llewellyn-Davies in its attempt to improve urban planning. One simple tip they offer is that house design should not be ruled by the need for car parking.

"Parking spaces in the front garden area lead to a harsh, car-dominated environment," the designers explain. Their graphic examples of housing design with and without cars are being used by the department and by local councils in London and Edinburgh.

The diagrams, shown above, illustrate what can be done with a one-hectare site on the edge of a town centre. The first, with two car spaces per house, means that a maximum of 46 three and four-

bedroom houses could be fitted into the area. The second, with just one car space per dwelling, means that three and four-storey blocks can fit where the houses would have been and that there is room for a communal square and some parkland. Where no car spaces exist, the dwellings and their environment are infinitely more attractive.

Such regeneration should help make our cities more attractive places and reduce the pressure on Hertfordshire county council, for example, to build 10,000 new homes in an area in Stevenage protected as green belt for 50 years.

Much remains to be done, however. Spending on social housing has been cut by successive Conservative and now Labour governments. Yet more than 11 million people still live in council housing, many on estates that are typically rife with social problems.

As one resident on the Hulme estate said: "It is true to say that we no longer see drug dealers on the street corners. But they are still operating. Now it is just by telephone." Mr Prescott may have pre-empted some of the demands of tomorrow's mass march in London by the countryside lobby, but urban regeneration has a long way to go.

ADAM BARNARD

Lynne Greenwood reports on a cheap and popular way to revitalise town centres

New homes are above the shop

When the Government announced this week that 60 per cent of all new homes would be built on existing or derelict urban sites, some of those who already enjoy city-centre living gave the plan their backing.

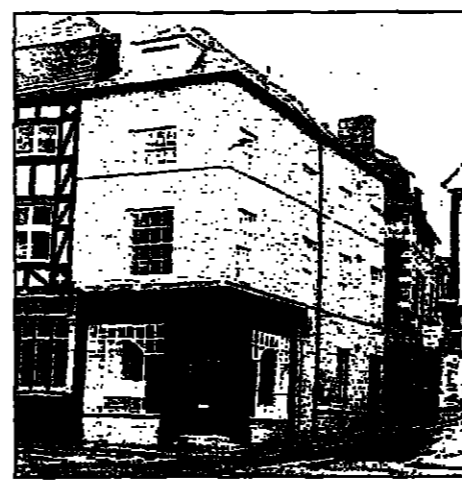
The Deputy Prime Minister revealed measures aimed at protecting the countryside from developers and meeting demand for an estimated 4.4 million new homes over the next 20 years.

Tony Beirne understands the problem. As assistant chief executive of North Hertfordshire District Council, based in Letchworth — the world's first "garden city" — one of his responsibilities is housing.

Mr Beirne, 37, moved from London, where he was commuting two hours a day to the City, and has become one of the new breed of flat dwellers who live "over the shop". His two-bedroom flat is above a designer menswear shop within walking distance of the office.

"I couldn't sell my flat in London — I was in a negative equity trap — so I wanted to rent an affordable place close to my new job," Mr Beirne says. "My flat over the shop is ideal. It means I can be in the office at eight after a very short walk and can pop home to change and for a bite to eat before evening meetings. I can even let the gas man in at lunchtime if it is really necessary."

Several restaurants nearby provide an alternative to cooking if he is home late.



People are moving back to the heart of Stamford, setting for the television series *Middlemarch*, after encouragement from the council to convert high street flats

"If we use a little imagination, there are opportunities like this all over the country, to use existing buildings," Mr Beirne says. "We are prisoners of history because of the way housing has evolved and, unfortunately, sometimes it can be cheaper to build new houses rather than move into existing, difficult areas."

However, he agrees with Mr Prescott's plans to revitalise cities to encourage people to live in them. "I love cities and anything that helps to regenerate them, bring back the buzz, is good. John Prescott's 60/40 balance is great because we also have to protect the countryside."

Mr Beirne's flat, close to the station and a 30-minute train journey from King's Cross, is rented from the Letchworth



Garden City Heritage Foundation, which owns and manages a £66 million property estate in the town. The foundation is working with two housing associations to convert empty space above shops into residential property.

Many towns and cities have adopted a similar concept for the millennium. Conscious of the need to house the growing numbers of single people and to make use of empty upper-floor space, they are aiming for a 24-hour city which resembles more closely many of their European counterparts.

Leitchworth took advice from Ann Petherick, a planner, who founded the Living Over The Shop (LOTS) project to enable property owners to convert and let empty storeys for residential use. Owners



negotiate a commercial lease with a housing association responsible for all dealings with residential tenants.

She believes that two per cent of the population of any town could be housed above the shops. Research shows that people living in town centres can help to reduce crime and create a feeling of security.

In Stamford, Lincolnshire, where much of the costume drama, *Middlemarch*, was filmed for television, the main advantage of living-over-the-shop schemes is that "occupancy means maintenance".

Bob Stewart, conservation officer for South Kesteven District Council, which covers the market town, says: "As we have a large number of listed buildings, maintenance is

vital. If upper storeys are left empty, the fabric of the building can deteriorate. If they are converted into residential accommodation, it is a good way of preserving them."

The council became the first to pilot a government initiative to house people over the shop in 1992. In 1881 a survey showed that 390 people lived in historic Stamford's High Street; 100 years later there were just seven. But now the numbers are rising again.

"The upper floors of many of our buildings would originally have been occupied by the owner, his servants and maybe six apprentices who worked for him. Now that accommodation is surplus to requirements," Mr Stewart says.

Middle-sized towns are not alone in taking the initiative. Newcastle, Leeds and Leicester have similar schemes. In Leeds, anxious to promote itself as the 24-hour city, the empty floors above a fish restaurant in the city centre's Kirkgate Triangle conservation area, have been converted into nine flats, jointly funded by Leeds City Council and the Yorkshire Metropolitan Housing Association.

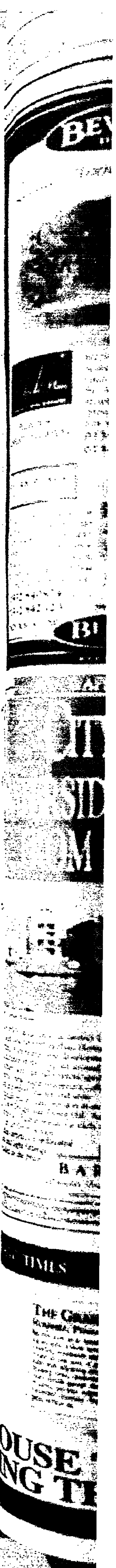
Dave Rawnsley, the project manager, says: "Wherever we have been involved in a scheme, the demand has always outstripped supply. There is an absolute cross-section of tenants, from people in their twenties to retired couples."

• Living Over The Shop, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP (01904 433972, fax 01904 433949)



Living in the town centre of Letchworth has many advantages for Tony Beirne

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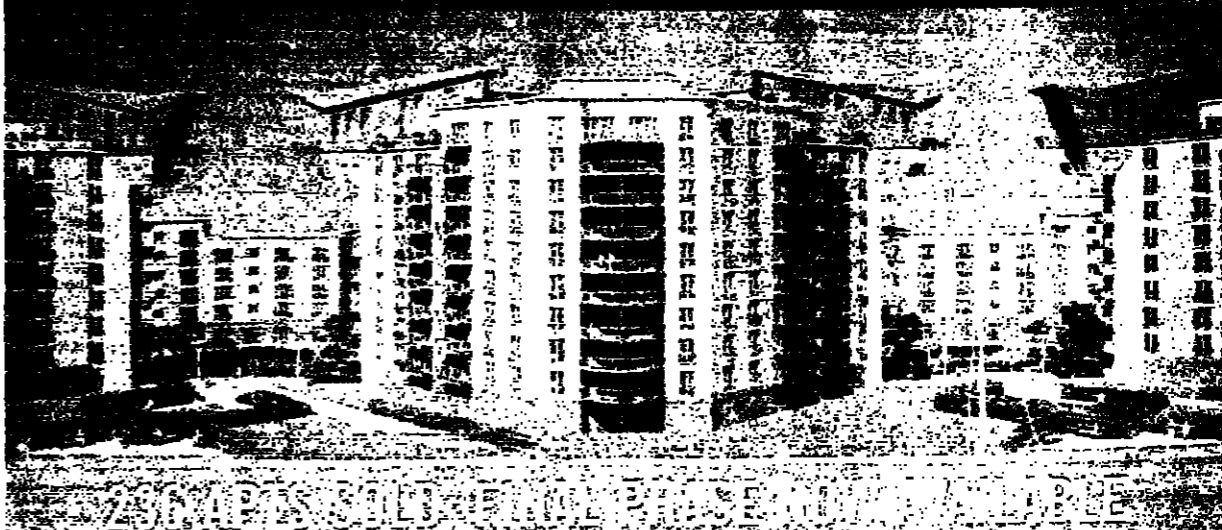
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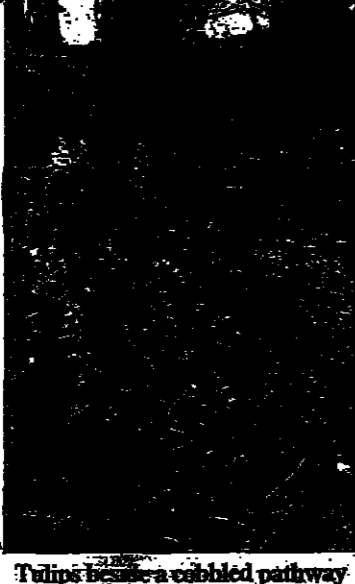
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The laburnum walk at Barnsley House ends in a stone plinth engraved with a quote by the 17th-century diarist, John Evelyn. "If you don't have views, create vistas," Mrs Verey says

A Verey grand design

ME AND MY GARDEN: ROSEMARY VEREY



Tulips line a cobbled pathway

Like Sissinghurst, Barnsley House gardens in Gloucestershire has an international reputation but, unlike Sissinghurst, it has the advantage of being run by its creator, Rosemary Verey, who is often found walking or working in the garden.

She is one of the queen bees of gardens, with clients such as Sir Elton John and the Prince of Wales. Not bad for someone who lived living in London in the early Thirties "because of all those lovely nightclubs".

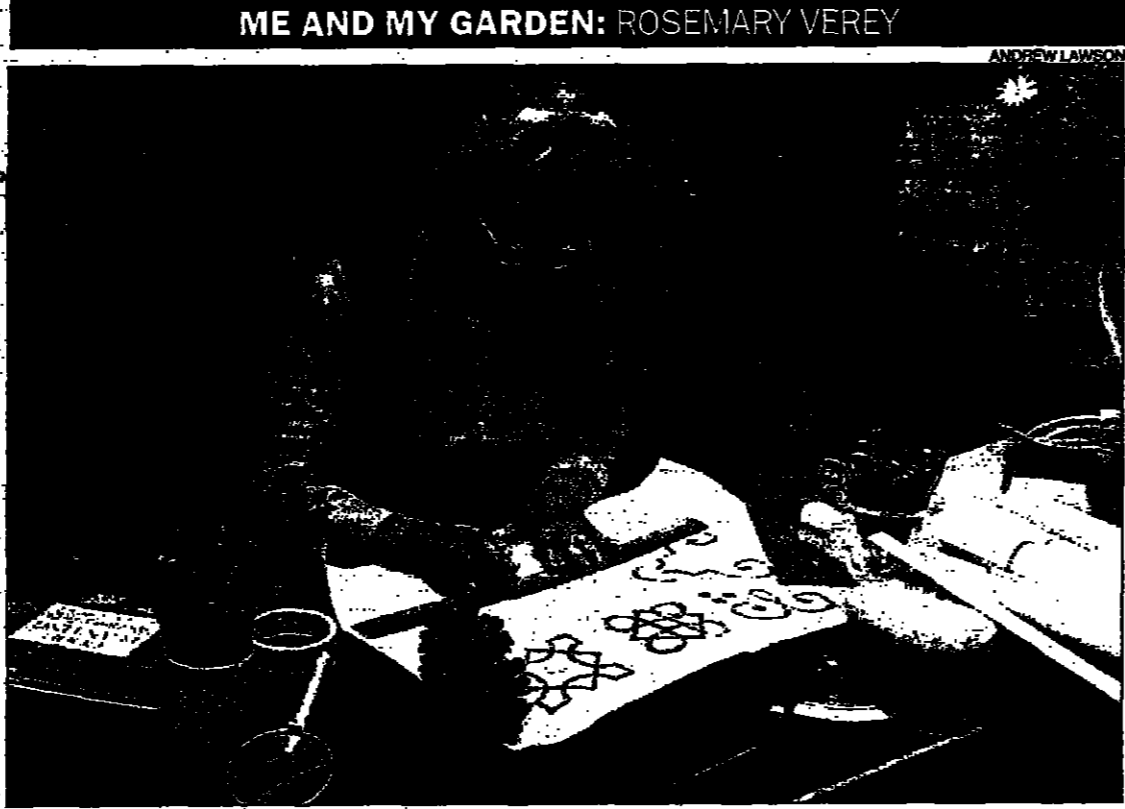
Of course, she now tends all those lovely plants at Barnsley. "People who live in the city don't have such a wonderful sense of nature and I want to help them rediscover it."

"The great thing about the garden is to make yourself comfortable and to enjoy it all," says Mrs Verey, who is 79 and received an OBE for her services to garden design.

"I inherited Barnsley through my husband, who was built in 1697 and is a wonderful, although not terribly grand, country house. I wanted to create a garden which would be worthy of it."

After bringing up four children, Mrs Verey read all the gardening books she could, went to Royal Horticultural Society shows and visited other gardens.

"I have tried to include all the things that would have been part of a garden like Barnsley over the past 300 years. I put in a knot garden to represent the 17th century and a wilderness of trees and shrubs for the 18th century."

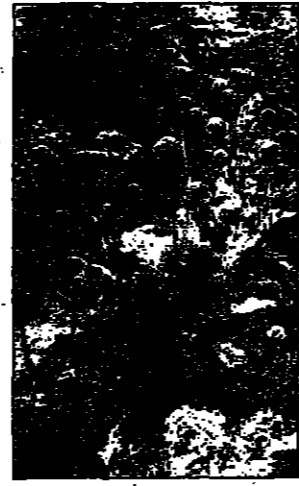


Rosemary Verey may be 80 this year but she still enjoys writing, lecturing and designing gardens

It is a walled garden, so there are no views, but Mrs Verey says: "If you don't have views, you can make vistas." A favourite of these is the laburnum walk with its *Allium aflatum* in June. Each of the vistas ends in an eyecatcher, from sculptures by Simon Verity to a stone plinth at the end of the laburnums engraved with a quote from the 17th-century diarist, John Evelyn.

Trees give the garden height and interest at every level: the pleached limes have spats of ivy kept at a neat foot or so above the soil, while cyclamen dot the grass beneath the trees.

A northwest border sprouts *Helianthus*, ferns, roses 'Clare de Dijon' and 'Veilchenblau', ivy, Solomon's seal and epimediums — living proof that you need never give up in the shade. Follow this border along, past neat, clipped box balls, and you come to a couple of benches set in a corner of the garden, beside a water feature of frogs spouting into a pool.



"What motivates one is the urge to create something. The feeling you have something inside you"

"It is important to have resting places in the garden," says Mrs Verey, who counsels visitors to slow down and look, then walk back again to see things from the other direction. One of her resting places is the Tuscan temple by a water lily pond.

Towards the centre of the garden, a classic Verey mixed bed of purple berberis as a backdrop for cosmos,

pale purple asters, white chrysanthemums, smoke bush and pink penstemons, is a stately contrast to a bed planted in honour of another great British gardener, Christopher Lloyd. Here there is a colourful, unrestrained border of dahlias and *Rosa rugosa* similar to Mr Lloyd's garden at Great Dixter in Sussex.

Mrs Verey was one of the first to make decorative vegetable gardens fashionable, and hers is to be found outside the walled pleasure garden through a pair of weeping cherries and a gate. A smiling scarecrow wearing sunglasses overlooks the potager, which is an intricate pattern of paths, gold and green topiary balls, roses, gooseberries, fruit trees, lavender, sweet pea arches and a whole spectrum of vegetables from cabbage to carrots and herbs.

It is the potager that launched Mrs Verey's writing career. "I had to make money in order to lay paths for the vegetable garden. I worked out how much it would cost for the paths."



Shrubs give height and interest

Then I wrote something for *Country Life* which paid me £15 — it was a fortune." This echoes Vita Sackville-West, who paid for her paths through her *Observer* gardening column.

Mrs Verey's love of gardening began when she went to school and, aged ten, shared a garden with a friend. "Our garden was made up of rows of vegetables and, when I went home in the holidays, I enjoyed digging the soil. However long you live there is a feeling of amazement when you grow plants you can eat."

Mrs Verey writes books, has recently been lecturing at Wakehurst Place in Sussex, the Royal Botanic Garden's country cousin, and is designing gardens in North America, Scotland and the Home Counties. And then there are her television series. Doesn't she ever feel like putting her feet up?

"Sometimes at seven in the morning I think it would be wonderful to lie in bed a little longer. It's mad, I know — I'll be 80 this year. What motivates one is the urge to create something. The feeling you have something inside you. I love it when a little boy comes along and says, 'I grow cacti. Have you got any?' I like the idea of inspiring someone of that age to grow something lovely."

JANE OWEN

● *Barnsley House gardens, Barnsley House, Barnsley, near Cirencester, Glos, are open Mon, Wed, Thur and Sat, 10am-5pm, £3.50. Parties by appointment only on 01285 740261.*



The Tuscan temple (left), where Mrs Verey likes to sit in the evening, the herb garden seen through a window of the house (centre) and the 300-year-old Barnsley House (right)

STEPHEN ANDERTON'S GARDEN ANSWERS

Q In August this year we shall be moving into an 1830s Regency house. It has a small walled garden. We would like to consider the option of using only plants available and popular in the period, although we do not wish to be too restricted. Can you suggest some books and other sources of information on plants and non-stately gardens of the period? — P. and G. Haynes, St Austell, Cornwall



A The gardens of the wealthy may have been the ones which set the trends, but smaller and poorer gardens have always muddled along in their sweet cottage way, imitating grander gardens when they felt moved to do so. There is nothing to be ashamed of there.

Unfortunately, it is only ever the grander gardens which have historically been well documented. Flower gardening — the province of the gardener more than the designer — gets even less attention when it comes to records. Fortunately, by 1830 the range of English garden flora was already very wide, and you will not feel unduly restricted. There is no published collection of Regency plant lists, but the *Garden History Society*, at 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6BP (0171-608 2409), will be able to draw on research files for you.

Original sources for the period, which deal with plants in some detail, include J.C Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Plants* (1829) and his long-running *Gardener's Magazine*, which

They have long, fat questing roots which need the depth and cool of border soil. One way to control the size is to pinch them out every 12-18in early in the season, to make the shoots branch out more. Once they get round to flowering in summer, you need to leave them alone.

Another way to restrict the spread is to cut out at ground level all but one stem, in mid-late spring. That stem will then be tall and vigorous, but at least there will not be half a dozen others rambling through other plants and sometimes pulling them down.

Q I am of a mind to mass plant the new lawn I am making with crocuses. Any advice please? — H. E. Darby, Carnforth, Lancs.

A Sounds like fun. You do realise you will not be able to cut the grass until the end of May, or August if you want the crocuses to self-seed well? The leaves of autumn crocuses, such as *C. nudiflorus* and *speciosus*, will begin to come through in December too. That said, it's a nice idea. Plant in the autumn, 2in deep and as thickly as you can afford. But try not to have the same density all over the lawn. Make the planting thicker with a few solid clumps under trees, and more scattered in the open. On this large scale you will just have to take a chance on losses to mice.



describes many "Villa Gardens" in detail, and Henry Phillips's *Sylvia Fiorifera* of 1825. You could also look at the excellent restored garden at Brighton Pavilion if you want to see period seaside plants.

Q We have a 6ft yew hedge which has grown too wide for easy trimming because I have allowed the branches to grow 3ft away from our side of the trunk. If I were to cut these branches back to, say, 1ft from the trunks, would the hedge recover, how long would it take, and when should it be done? — Dr A. A. Gibberd, Basingstoke, Hants.

A Cut the hedge back in April, feed it well with a high-nitrogen fertiliser such as dried blood, and it should be clothed in green again in two to three years. But do not cut back to a foot from the trunks. Cut right back to the trunks themselves. The response will be far better, and faster in the long term.

Q I have a perennial sweet pea at the back of a border. It is so vigorous that it climbs 12ft and more into the trees. Could I control it by cutting it back as it grows, without harming it? Could I grow it as a standard in a pot? — Mrs A. Parsons, Barton-under-Needwood, Staffs.

A Some perennial peas such as *Lathyrus grandiflorus* and *latifolius* are very vigorous. Others, like the blue *Lathyrus nervosus*, are weak, prone to mildew and difficult. None enjoys pot culture.



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When you can't see the wood for the trees

The Government is considering setting a limit on the height of Leyland cypress hedges. Sue Corbett reports

One is never long into any conversation about the Leyland cypress before someone goes "Zwip" in imitation of a chainsaw. And, lately, emotions have been running particularly high over this problem-ridden tree (official name *Cupressocyparis leylandii*), around 250,000 of which are planted every year in England and Wales.

They were horror stories in ITV's *Neighbours from Hell* and the BBC's *Neighbours at War* about the unfortunate people whose homes had gardens in the leylandii shadow. One of them, Michael Jones of Selly Oak, Birmingham, who won a courtroom battle with the neighbouring owner of a gigantic leylandii hedge, was in fighting form again recently when, having given his neighbour notice, he sent in his own contractor to effect annual maintenance of the offending growth. "My contractor said he was just an ordinary fellow before he knew me," says Mr Jones, "but these days he appears regularly on television."

Now at the forefront of a national campaign against unneighbourly planting of leylandii, in October Mr Jones was part of a delegation explaining the scale of the problem to Angela Eagle, Under Secretary for Environment and Transport.

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions has followed this up with a statement saying that ministers "are considering whether government intervention is justified to limit the height of leylandii hedges", and further news of their deliberations is likely by mid-March.

While it is now clear that anti-social leylandii planting will not be made an offence under the Crime and Disorder Bill, one control mechanism that is thought to remain on the table is the idea of a new law requiring planning permission to plant them.

The *Daily Mail* has leapt to the barricades with a call from writer James Bartholomew for "a people's movement to rise up and demand the end of this brutish plant". He goes so far as to envisage "demonstrations outside every garden centre selling the horrible things

and the publication in local newspapers of leylandii owners who have allowed them to flourish". That is about as sensible as picketing record shops on the grounds that some of their customers are going to disturb neighbours by playing their music too loud.

Tree surgeons love the Leyland cypress — its phenomenal growth is reckoned to account for 60 per cent of their work — but they are not the only ones who sing its praises. To owners of large estates, the Leyland cypress is a joy to the eye. "As individual trees, in the right place, they are superb in every way," says Colin Morgan, dendrologist and curator of the Forestry Commission's Bedgebury Pinetum at Goudhurst, Kent, which boasts Britain's three tallest Leyland cypresses, measuring 131ft to 135ft.

He says: "They are awe-inspiring, full of grandeur, shapely and resistant to wind, and they harbour huge numbers of birds — siskins, finches, goldcrests, wrens."

It could even be that leylandii will one day be used as a timber tree. "We have an experimental plot of them at Bedgebury and are looking into getting the timber stress graded to see how far it will bend before it breaks. The timber is most attractive, with a lovely scent when cut, and it settles down to a beautiful creamy yellow, with a lovely grain and knot."

The Leyland cypress is such a good windbreak for those who live by the sea that residents of Langney Point, Eastbourne, have mounted a campaign to dissuade borough council tree officers from felling them. "We just top them instead," says Eastbourne Borough Council's assistant arbicultural officer Nick Ritson.

Of course, what causes the fire is the Leyland cypress's unsuitability for small gardens. "It's a stupid tree for suburbia," says Mr Morgan, "but the first thing some people do when they move into a new housing development is plant them in the back garden. Then they just leave them and 20 years later they're someone else's problem."



Michael Jones won a court battle to cut down his neighbour's hedge. Britain's tallest Leyland cypress at Goudhurst, Kent (right) is 135ft tall

"I've seen Leyland cypresses ten feet from the house and they're so dense and fast-growing that they'll shoot up three feet a year in height and a foot in other directions. If you have a lawn, it will just go brown and die because they're very hungry. They'll starve any flowerbed of nutrients and light."

In 20 years of working with trees, Mr Morgan has taken out a remarkable number for friends and acquaintances. "I've even removed some from small patio gardens. The trees were perfectly healthy, just far too big for their situation. Although you don't need to touch them until they're two metres tall in about year five, after that you need to take the top off at least once a year until they get the message and stop growing upwards," says Mr Morgan.

There are forms of Leyland cypress, 'Castellwellan' and 'Goldcunda', that are slower-growing and easier to control than the Leighton Green type that is usually

sold for hedges, but their colour — yellowy-green and a brightish yellow, against Leighton's grey-green — are not so popular. 'Vito', from France, which was recently planted at Bedgebury, is to be avoided at all costs as it grows two metres a year.

Pending the Government statement, Mr Jones's telephone support line offers counselling for those oppressed by leylandii and other high hedges. "The law is entirely on the side of the nuisance-maker," he says. "Some people come sobbing, in a terrible state. I tell them to contact their MPs, not their solicitors."

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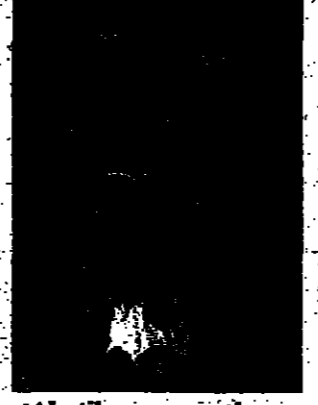
Beauty tips for people in glass houses

Barbara Abbs advises on the best plants for a cheerful winter conservatory



Barbara Abbs in her conservatory. She recommends cultivars that do not hang on grimly to their dead flowers

Conservatories should come into their own of the coldest months of the year. Usually built on to a house, they benefit from the warmth of the building and can be reached without going out of doors. Even without any additional heat, they normally remain frost-free. However, the temperature at which the most desirable tender plants survive varies considerably and one that will thrive at 4C can be reduced to a brown mess if the temperature falls to 3C. When the plant is in flower, this can be very disappointing.



Abutilon megapoticum

I have taken the time of last year, in my own conservatory, to select plants that would love to grow. *Buddleia asiatica* for its perfume, or *Brunfelsia pauciflora* with its intense purple-blue flowers which fade over three days to white. *Canarina* and *agapanth* are rare and beautiful. But all these need more heat and care than I can give them and, after many

years of watching previous plants die, I have settled on a winter planting plan that gives me great satisfaction, and no heartache. Most of the plants that I grow are for late winter and early spring flowers. Camellias, in particular, are hardy but I cannot grow them at all because I garden on chalk. They can also have all their flowers browned after an unkind frost. By November, the shrubs that grow happily in tubs out of doors most of the year already have fat buds which show a little colour. In December they are brought inside and they flower from January to March. The only thing to remember is to water

them well with rainwater through August and September when they are making their flower buds. There are many white camellias, some with bright yellow stamens, but at that time of year I appreciate the vivid pink of 'Debbie', the carnation-flowered camellia. It verges on the vulgar but in the depths of winter who needs cool restraint? This drops its flowers whole before the petals turn brown and the blooms die. You do not want a cultivar that hangs grimly on to its dead flowers. Another favourite is 'Desire', which has pointed petals arranged symmetrically like a water lily. Also tinged with pink is the



Narcissus, crocus and iris can be potted in the autumn

species, *glauca variegata*, will grow out of doors in a favoured spot from spring but will flower cheerfully in a conservatory in a pot from January onwards. The variegated foliage and vivid flowers sparkle against the evergreen leaves of the camellias. *Daphne odora* is another evergreen that is usually grown out of doors but can be grown as a pot plant in a conservatory, where its heady perfume can be enjoyed much earlier in the year. Cuttings from an outdoor plant will, if they root, soon flower. I have some that are about to bloom for the second year running. Early bulbs, like crocuses or the small daffodils and irises, can be potted up in autumn and left outside. But only bring them in when the buds are visible, when they make a good display. Another flowering plant for a conservatory wall is *Abutilon megapoticum*. This has pretty red and yellow lantern-like hanging flowers over a long period. However, it is susceptible to scale insects, which can be effectively controlled with malathion but are difficult to spot. See camellias at the March and April Royal Horticultural Society shows at Vincent Square, Westminster, London SW1, where exhibitors will give advice on choosing a plant and how to look after it. RHS: 0171-6307422. Garden shows: March 17, 18, April 14, 15.

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My neighbour needs Y-fronts

In the second challenge of a series, we find that spying over the fence is most enlightening



DAVID BOWKER

Ted, who lives next-door-but-one, only changes his underpants once a week. I discovered this purely by chance, while making an itemised list of the clothes hanging on his washing-line. Whereas his wife and children own a normal quota of undergarments, Ted's collection consists of two pairs of faded paisley Y-fronts, which grace the line on alternate weeks.

I didn't want to know this. I'm not the prying type. Like most journalists, I keep myself to myself and mind my own business. But challenged to spy on my neighbours, I reluctantly went out to buy a pair of high-powered binoculars. I also kept an hourly record of all movements in the immediate vicinity.

I quickly learnt that the man next door is having financial problems. His full name is Neville Roger Black, but to protect his privacy, I'll call him Neville. Neville is obsessed with speed. He races Formula Three cars. Neville doesn't speak to me any more because I once mistakenly referred to his racing car as a go-kart.

He also drives a top-of-the-range Mercedes. It's a fast car. It needs to be. A lot of people are chasing Neville, including the company that gave him the loan for the Mercedes.

On Monday, while Neville was out, a black BMW rolled up and a debt collector stepped out. I knew he was a debt collector because he had a tattoo all over his face. The tattoo was shaped exactly like an ugly face.

He hammered on Neville's front door for five minutes. Then, after glancing around furtively, he knelt down and peered through the letterbox. I waited for Neville to return, so I could tell him how nosy the debt collector had been, but Neville disappointed me by staying out all night. (Why? Where was he? What was he up to?)

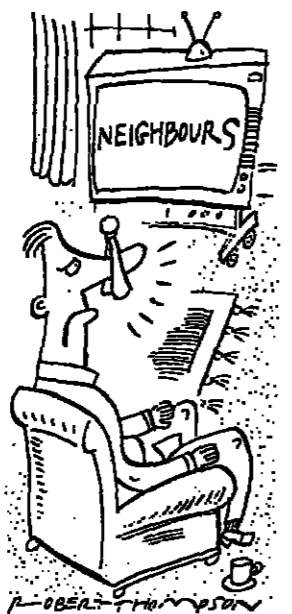
On Tuesday morning, I was awoken at about six

o'clock by the sound of the milk float. For some weeks now, somebody, or something, has been stealing the cream off the top of our milk bottles.

I immediately came downstairs, opened the curtains and trained my binoculars on the Squire's residence. The Squire owns the Grade II listed building across the square.

At 6.30 sharp, the Squire opened his front door to let his dog out. And, sure enough, at 6.35, the Squire's dog, a handsome golden retriever, trotted nonchalantly over to my front door and started nibbling at a milk-bottle top.

I rescued the milk, gave the dog a biscuit (love the criminal, hate the crime) and tucked an anonymous note into its collar which read: "Dear Squire, no wonder



you're rich. You obviously don't buy any dog food."

Later that day I strolled past the house of Bill Gear, the local violin-maker. I saw an attractive young woman enter Bill's workshop. When I returned 30 minutes later, the woman was just leaving. She was smiling, which immediately aroused my suspicions. I decided to investigate.

It occurred to me that nothing was preventing me from calling at Bill's cottage and asking to see his instruments. He opened the door cheerfully enough and took me into his workshop in the hope of selling me a cello. As I'd suspected, there was a large sofa in one corner of the room. "Does your wife know what you get up to?" I asked him. Bill took offence. "If you're not going to buy anything, sling your hook," he advised.

On my way out, I threatened to film him on the job and show the evidence to his wife. He said: "You'll need a wide-angled lens," and slammed the door in my face.

Wednesday was uneventful. But on Thursday two men from the electricity board arrived to turn off Neville's power. I went outside and offered to help them kick the door down. They told me to mind my own business.

"It is my business," I protested. "People who don't pay their bills make electricity more expensive for honest users like myself."

That night, Neville came home to a powerless house and had to go to bed by torchlight. He borrowed the torch from Ted. He didn't ask to borrow my torch because he isn't talking to me.

Ted isn't talking to me either because yesterday I asked him how much money he had in the bank. Indignantly, Ted asked me why I wanted to know. I said: "Because if you're hard up, I'd like to offer to buy you a new pair of underpants."



History is not so horrible for Martin Wenner's children, Gabriel, left, Dominic, Max and Imogen, who are receiving their education at home

In a class of their own

An increasing number of parents believe in home education for children. Madeleine Kingsley reports

While about one million children are uniformly heads-down at school, Max Wenner, ten, is happily at home in Cheshire. Wearing footie strip, he's perched on the Aga, reading his *Horrible History of the ancient Greeks*. Later he will devote an hour or so to the computerised city he has designed and where, as simulated governor, he runs the whole urban show from budgets to policing and amenities. "I'd like a nuclear power station, but I haven't worked out how to make my scientists invent one," he explains. There are three other children in the family. Imogen, six, is com-

pleting the missing words in a story, while Gabriel, eight, shows Don Juan, four, how in theory at least — you can light a fire by focusing the sun's rays through a magnifying glass.

Their parents, Martin, an actor, known for his role in the television drama series, *Roughnecks*, and Debbie Horsfield, a scriptwriter for the series *Making Out* and *Born to Run*, were conventionally schooled to degree level and are among a rapidly increasing number of families — an estimated 20,000 — who have opted to educate their children at home.

According to Jane Lowe, of the Home Education Advisory Service, the biggest single reason at the moment for pulling children out of school is bullying. She says: "We've also had a lot of inquiries recently from parents worried about the government White Paper in which the need for special-needs schools is reassessed. They simply don't want their children going into mainstream education."

The Weners felt that school did not fit the needs of Max, their eldest son. "Although he'd walk into class bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, he developed his habit of falling asleep," Martin says. "He was obviously miserable, but his enthusiasm began to wane, as did his appetite for learning. Five years into the home-education experiment, Martin and Debbie are confident that they

made the right decision. Martin says that Debbie's sister, Jeannie, comes in to teach the children on two or three mornings a week, sometimes on a one-to-one basis, sometimes in twos or threes. "Having individual attention means they don't have to put in a crammed eight-hour day with homework," he says. "They can also pursue a topic as long as it interests them. They're not stopped mid-flow by a half-hour bell obliging them to abandon interest legally obliged to send their children to school and they can sit GCSE examinations with other children when they reach the right age.

Those of us who have briefly considered the idea of home education only to dismiss it as limiting, impractical or beyond our daring might like to believe that home educators are cranky nonconformists. In fact, the Weners are rearing their children in an old, honoured and proven tradition that has produced such assorted "greats" as Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Bertrand Russell, Charlie Chaplin, Yehudi Menuhin, Noël Coward, Richard Gere and several American presidents. At 11, the future Queen Victoria was obliged to repeat her knowledge parrot-fashion

tally, we've shifted from being an information-poor society, where you had to rely on teachers, to an information-rich society.

"Nowadays, you can buy your child a CD-Rom that will do the job more effectively than a teacher," because the user has control of it. We haven't yet taken account of the fact that, because we now have education ready at our fingertips, our model of schooling belongs in the era of the coach and horse.

The Wener children have no bogey teachers, no dread of imperatorable homework, and, as yet, no exams.

Twenty years of research have convinced Roland Meighan, special professor at Nottingham University, that home education is the enlightened way forward. His surprising revelation is that children who learn at home are, on average, two years ahead of their classroom peers. Dr Meighan says: "In the States, where home education is very big business, rigorous testing of matched samples has confirmed this lead in numeracy and literacy, in emotional maturity and social skills. Consequently, 5 per cent of the school-age population in the States is already home-educated as opposed to our own not-quite 1 per cent."

But how, for instance, could a science-ignorant parent do well by a child who dreams of becoming a doctor, engineer or dentist? "Quite easily," Dr Meighan claims. "Fundamen-

Education Otherwise, (Jane Lowe) PO Box 7420, London N9 9SG (0891 518303). The Home Education Advisory Service (01707 371854)

CD-Roms will do the job better than a teacher

The strain of being a brain

ANITA CLEMENS had an idea that her daughter, Daisy, was going to be exceptional when she began talking at the age of six months. At three she borrowed her sister's books and taught herself to read and, one day, she said to her mother in the car: "How can there be a present because the past and the future must merge at the same moment?"

It would be enough to make most of us drive off the road, but Anita, a teacher from Rotherham and a member of Mensa, was used to her daughter's extraordinary intelligence by this time. At six, Daisy's IQ was measured as 178 — the entry point to Mensa for children is 131.

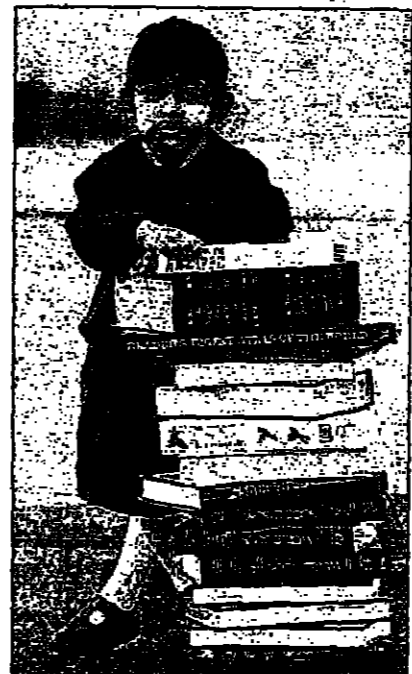
Last month Mensa took in three-year-old Dinesh, a child prodigy, who had an IQ of 168. The youngest member of Mensa was Benjamin Woods, who joined when he was 34 months old. This year Joshua Bright, of Hackney, is expected to become the youngest GCSE candidate, taking his Maths exam at five.

There are 2,200 child members of Mensa in Britain. Are they extraordinarily gifted — or do their parents just work very hard on them?

Joshua's Nigerian-born father, Gbola, who teaches his son at home, says: "When Joshua was two, I played some multiplication tapes to him and immediately realised he had an extraordinarily retentive memory. Some people might think we're putting pressure on him, but if someone has a gift, you must bring it out."

Dr Peter Condon, a child psychologist from Solihull, works with many gifted children and their parents. He says: "I endorse the belief that genius is 99 per cent perspiration, 1 per cent inspiration. I think there is a very real danger that some

Life is not always easy for gifted children



Dineshi: a Mensa member at 3

my wife would go through all the months of the year and the letters of the alphabet over and over again," Nix says. "When Dineshi could talk she repeated them straight back to her — it was quite incredible."

Dineshi's brother, Dinesh, will be taking his GCSEs at least a year early. The family say they have no idea of the origin of their children's extraordinary intelligence.

Dr Condon says: "The danger for parents of very bright children is that because they put so much emphasis on the child's intelligence, the child begins to think that is the only reason they are valued. Quite often, a child will rebel. They will conspire to defeat their parent's aims by resisting learning — and may lose their way after formal education has ended."

A case in point is 45-year-old Graham Ford, of Stoke-on-Trent. With an IQ of 155, he found school very easy. But he has had more than 30 jobs, from labouring to industrial radiography. "It's been the story of my life," he says. "I think my so-called 'intelligence' has affected my ability to settle. It's hard to find your niche when you're deemed so 'clever.'"

Dr Condon says many employers are reluctant to take on extremely bright graduates, because they fear they would quickly find jobs boring. Many of us also feel quite uncomfortable around people with very high IQs. So, spare a thought for these children — will their star shine so brightly when they are no longer the child prodigy?

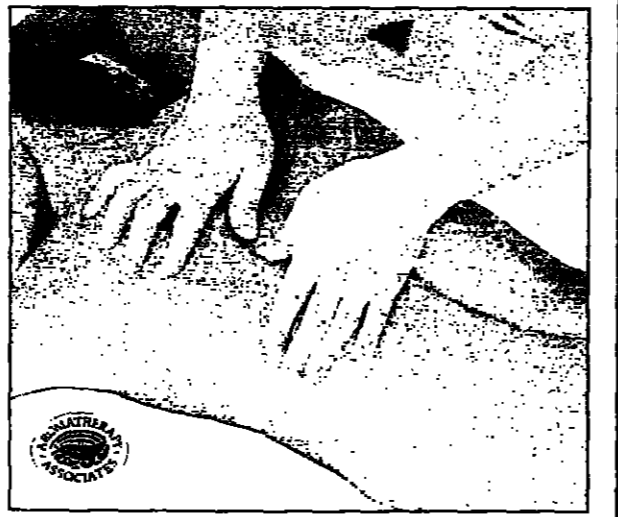
DIANA APPEYARD
If you think your child may have a very high IQ the Mensa hotline is 01902 717571.

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*Correction: In today's magazine we have incorrectly stated that the participating salons below belong to Aromatherapy Associates. They are, in fact, independently owned. *The Times* apologises for this mistake.

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حکذا من الاصل

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'Grandma would sit with the map on her lap, turning it round every time we changed direction and saying 'turn left back there'

See you later, navigator

LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

Half-term found us both in a fairly rocky state. I had become convinced that my domestic appliances were conspiring against me. Alexander, meanwhile, burst into tears while sitting on my lap, cleaning his teeth (most unusual, this — generally his stool is so Spartan-boy-with-tooths that I wonder, in my chery, Penelope Leach inspired way, if it is not pathological) and sobbed that he couldn't bear living in London for another minute; he never saw any fields and tractors. (I repeated this, with tears in my eyes, to a friend who remarked unkindly that he hoped it wouldn't make any sudden movement this account, since no sooner had I approved us to somewhere within striking distance of fields and tractors than I should find him back on my knee, inseparable with nostalgia for McDonald's and the Curry Sark.)

and every time it feels about as calm and untroubled as Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt.

Everyone knows that it is impossible to move a baby from place to place without carrying your own bodyweight in zinc and castor oil and muslin squares and Tommy Tippee beakers and the special peach 'n' kumquat juice that is the only sort he will drink and Boots in Bideford might not have any, and what then? Well, of course, he will die of dehydration, and it will be All Your Fault — and what will you say to the grandparents when you get back home with his little wizened body in a shoebox?

some days before we set off, a pile begins to grow in the front room of stuff rather like that acquired by Evelyn Waugh's William Boot in preparation for his journey to Ismaidia: tent, collapsible canoe, sou-wester, coil of rope, stick for whacking snakes — yup, we seem to have all of those. Also the entire cast of *Star Wars*, rendered in lifelike plastic, four inches high, and a substantial Gentleman's Library — presumably to avert boredom, should we run out of conversation.

Alexander was a baby, the navigation system consisted of Grandma, who would sit with the map on her lap, turning it round every time we changed direction, and saying, in a voice that was no less maddening for being very small and apologetic, things like, "Turn left back there!" and, as one thundered down upon a motorway exit with eight possible options, "Hang on a minute".

necessary to travel between here and Bideford, together with their entrances and exits. It took him five minutes. This time, Alexander had made a map, too. It shows how to get from the toyshop at Blackheath to the one at Bideford, by way of Pluto, Saturn, the North Pole and Alderan. It has sharks on it, and pirates, and parrots and pandas, and it came in very handy while we were away.

to improving activity — the museum, the ancient monument, the steam railway — anything not to hear the awful words, "I'm bored" or worse "I'm bored with you". It is ever so educational — especially for me.

This time, we visited the beach, the riverbank, the possibly Bronze Age — but maybe only medieval — bridge. We watched a four-wheel-drive ford a stream (and hoped it would get stuck, only no such luck). And eventually we fetched up at a small zoo which was, as these places often are, rather sad. The rabbits and guinea pigs looked content enough with their lot; the largish macaw in the smallest cage perhaps slightly less so; the little faces of the marmosets and tamarins were suffused with a melancholy that struck me as intolerable.



An office in the office: Victor Mature distracts Ann Sheridan in the film *Stella*. In America "love contracts" forbid romance between colleagues

All hands on desks

Your eyes meet across the crowded photocopier and your heart misses a beat. He raises one eyebrow and beckons towards the coffee machine. Over a lukewarm polystyrene cup of tea, a joke is shared and you giggle loudly, too loudly, excitement and electricity coursing through your veins. Before you know where you are, you are the talk of the typing pool. Another office affair.

Statistics suggest that more and more of us are finding romance this way. With ever increasing time spent at work, it is now more likely than ever that this is where we will find our partners. In America, the land of litigation and prosperous lawyers, office romances can end up in court instead of coming to a natural end. Sexual harassment suits brought by spurned lovers have become so commonplace and are so debilitating that many American corporations are insisting their employees take out premarriage agreements before embarking on a quickie behind the filing cabinet.

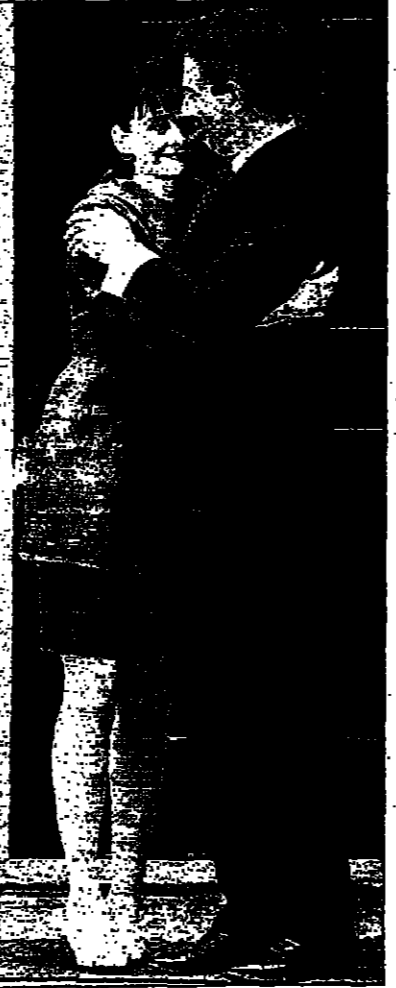
And this dampening of desire is spreading across the Atlantic. British corporations already employ private detectives to track employees' travel itineraries, to comb through expense accounts and mobile-phone bills and to check e-mails in search of office romances.

Catherine, a 29-year-old broker with Merrill Lynch, was recently shocked to be asked by her manager if she would like to press charges against a colleague with whom she was harmlessly flirting. "He had only been teasing," she said. "It makes for a better working atmosphere if these things aren't taken too seriously."

French banker Chantal decided to pack her bags and head home after sampling British office life. "In Paris it is normal for the men in the office to smile and flirt. Here everything is cold and brisk and you don't hear people laughing and chattering."

Nicholas Soames, labelled as a "sexist Tory" by the female Labour MPs known as "Blair's Babes" for his joking and banter in the House of Commons, is beside himself with despair. "I do like girls," he says, "but under the dictates of the Labour Party we mustn't drink green-

Carol Chapman suggests that instead of banning office flirtations we should learn to do it properly



Work mates: Tony and Cherie Blair



Kim Basinger and Alec Baldwin

topped milk, we're not allowed beef on the bone and we can't flirt at work. It's all over."

How has it come to this? Surely a bit of flirtation at the office never did anyone any harm? Quite so, says Jilly Cooper, author of *How to Survive 9-5*. "The reason we all wanted to go to work in the first place was because that's where the men were," she says. "And if they were lovely they became one's boyfriend. Nothing can equal the excitement of the office party, everyone getting ready together in the loo and putting on new tights."

Indeed, many business men and women would argue that a bit of flirting can be big business. All the telephones, faxes, e-mails and video links in the world don't stop us flying across continents for an eye-level meeting because nothing beats making a personal connection to clinch a deal.

For television companies, getting the

right on-screen sexual chemistry for programmes is like winning the lottery. Presenters who flirt are very popular with viewers, making a vital difference in the television ratings war, as Johnny Vaughan and Denise Van Outen of Channel 4's *The Big Breakfast* have proved. Their strategic fluttering of eyelashes has helped increase viewing figures from 500,000 to four million people daily in just a few months.

And where would Charles and Kay Saatchi, Kim Basinger and Alec Baldwin, Loyd Grossman and Debbie Putnam be if they'd had to sign a love contract after their first cuddle behind the stationery cupboard? Even our glitzy first couple, Tony and Cherie Blair, met at work after Lord Irvine put them only a desk away in his chambers, and it didn't affect their work.

Many professions are barred to colour-deficient, including the armed forces, airlines, railways and many electrical trades. In South Korea, they are not allowed to drive.

Patrick Lum's career path was ultimately determined by his 67 per cent red-colour deficiency. First, his teenage aspiration of flying planes with the RAF was foiled; later, his application to become a BBC sound technician failed because of his colour deficiency. After an unsuccessful appeal, he made his career behind the microphone. Twenty-eight years later, he is a successful presenter on BBC Radio 2.

Precautions are understandable, particularly in safety-related occupations where the ability to react quickly to red lights can be a matter of life or death. The clampdown on colour-vision criteria can be traced back to a spate of train wrecks in

Why Hague missed the colour purple

A new lens may help millions of people who find colours confusing, writes Terri Paddock

William Hague could not see the significance of proposed changes to the traditional Tory blue last week. Political pundits were fascinated by the three shades of purple on display at a press conference to relaunch the new-look party, but the Tory leader, according to reports, was quite indifferent. Why? Because Mr Hague is among the 8 per cent of males — two million people in Britain, and 250 million worldwide — who suffer from colour deficiency, or what is commonly called colour blindness.

Those who are truly colour-blind — seeing only black and white — are very rare, perhaps three in every million people. The others, including Mr Hague, are colour-vision deficient — which "doesn't mean that they don't see any colours at all," says Dr David Harris, of the Corneal Laser Centre at Clatterbridge Hospital, Wirral, Cheshire. "Most colour-deficients see colours, but not in quite the same way as the rest of us. So, if we have a spectrum of colours, a rainbow for instance, a colour-deficient will see fewer colours than a non-colour-deficient. They just have a limited spectrum which causes confusion."

The most common confusions involve reds and greens. About 6 per cent of males have a green deficiency whereby they frequently confuse greens with browns. A further 2 per cent suffer a red deficiency in which bright reds are confused with blacks and dark greys. Although there are types of colour blindness that result from brain injury, most cases are genetic. Women rarely afflicted themselves, pass the faulty chromosome on to their sons.

Most sufferers, having been born with the condition, claim to be unaffected by it. Although they may have ingenious methods of disguising their colour blindness, the outside world is not kind to them. In addition to the daily problems of mismatched socks and clashing ties, colour-deficients have to navigate road systems in which signs, lights and vehicles are colour-coded. And can you imagine the nightmare of trying to read a London Underground map?

In the early school years where many classroom assignments involve a box of crayons, finger paints or colour-coded reading systems, colour-deficients are at a clear disadvantage. "I've had patients who've had experiences as schoolchildren where they've used the wrong crayon in art class and been punished," Dr Harris says. He believes that colour blindness should be afforded the same seriousness as dyslexia. "If the teachers aren't really switched on, they may miss the fact that the child's problems are due to colour deficiency and think they are due to a learning difficulty," he says.

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Colour-deficient: Mr Hague

the 1870s directly linked to colour deficiency — including one accident in Sweden where nine people died.

Colour deficiency may also isolate sufferers from everyday cultural experiences. There is little doubt that colour evokes powerful though subconscious associations. Advertisers have long used this to their advantage in branding and packaging. McDonald's, for example, uses bright yellow and orange in its restaurants. The colours are very welcoming, but so intense that customers don't want to stay long. Toblerone is said to have borrowed the yellows and reds of its chocolate's packaging from car-carn dancers.

Mary Spillane, managing director of Colour Me Beautiful, who has spent 15 years consulting on the impact of colour, believes colour-deficients are missing out. "They're less in tune," she says. "They're the ones who are most unconscious about design and imagery. And, I think, because colour is so emotive and powerful, that's only to be understood."

Worcester-based Donald Harvey, 63, would agree. An artist, he has had a few embarrassing moments, including a portrait that featured the subject as a "canary" green rather than the flesh browns he had meant to use for shadowing. A bigger disappointment, though, has been his inability to capture the aesthetic essence of a painting. "I can see when I think colour is harmonious in a picture," he says, "but I've always known it was hit or miss. It's often wrong. I just can't get that perfect harmony."

Luckily for Mr Harvey and others like him, help is now available. Dr Harris has developed a specially tinted contact lens that goes a long way towards correcting colour deficiency. The ChromaGen lens is a red-tinted screen, worn over the less dominant eye and tailored to the appropriate degree for each person. It tricks the brain into seeing colours in a new way.

In trials, 97 per cent of users said they noticed a significant improvement wearing the lens. More than 1,000 colour-deficients are now using ChromaGen and it is available, as contact lenses or sunglasses, from qualified opticians.

After experimenting with the lens for an hour, Mr Harvey is enthusiastic. "The colour with the lens glows more, it's more exciting," he says. "It's got a life to it."

Maybe Mr Hague should invest in the product.

© The Corneal Laser Centre, 0151-334 0738, or e-mail: chromagensupport@corneal.demon.co.uk. The ChromaGen lens is available from £275.



Dr Harris uses a ChromaGen lens, a tinted screen for colour-deficients

their own

B

being a brain

Drumming up different beat

FEATHER REPORT

"LESSER SPOTTED" is a description often used in relatively genial insults from "lesser spotted mugwump" to "lesser spotted creep". The authentic, original source of all these characterisations is the lesser spotted woodpecker, a specimen of which I was watching last week.

This is the time of year to look for these elusive birds. Unlike their cousins, the great spotted woodpeckers, which hang on trunks and large branches to peck out insects, the lesser spotted flutters about high in the twigs of oaks and alders — and as they are only the size of a great tit and much quieter, they are not easily noticed.

However, on fine days in late February and early March they can often be heard drumming. To announce that they are owners of a territory, they do not sing, but hammer a dead branch rapidly with their beak. Great spotted do the same, but their drumming is a loud, sturdy sound. The lesser spotted produce a thinner, drier sound, which can sound like a branch creaking.

It was this sound that drew me to my bird, which was in a tree-top in a little strip of wood between some fields in Buckinghamshire. Even before I saw the bird, my ear had told me that it was a lesser spotted, since it also gave its spring vocal call, a rather feeble "pee-pee-pee". The great spotted's call is equally distinctive — a loud "chack".

I had a clear view of it clinging to a thin branch, with its black and white barred

back and its red crown. Again, the great spotted is easily distinguished from it because it is pied, not barred, and is about half as large again.

In March it is also possible to see the lesser spotted woodpecker's aggressive and courtship flight — a gliding flight with spread wings, during which it looks like a miniature hoopoe. When it is in dispute with a neighbour, it has another curious trick. It settles above its rival on a tree trunk, then leans backwards and displays its spread wings to the bird below. It will also lurk behind a thin trunk, flicking its wings at its opponent.

The pair make their nest in a hole in a trunk or branch. They generally nest as they live, high up. Another oddity is that the male does more of the work of bringing up the brood, not only making the hole, but doing the greater part of the incubating and even feeding of the young. These are demanding little creatures, who as they get bigger will put their heads out of the hole to see if their father is coming. They call a lot, and it is possible to find a nest by this means. But if the sun shines in the next week or two, that will be the best time to go hunting for lesser spotted.

DERWENT MAY
 ● What's about birds — Watch out for sparrowhawks starting their display flights. Twickers — Thayer's gull, Kittiwake, Dovecot, great spotted cuckoo, Dawlish. Devon, ferruginous duck, Stiffneck. Norfolk Details from Birdline 0861 700322. Calls cost 50p a minute.



Lesser spotted woodpeckers are only the size of a great tit



JCB excavators, those building site staples, are fast gaining in popularity among adrenalin junkies keen on showing their mastery at racing a huge beast of a machine

Seven-and-a-half tons of fun

Becoming airborne at 25mph in a growling seven-and-a-half ton JCB excavator is not for the faint-hearted. But in terms of sheer adrenalin-powered excitement, the experience takes some beating.

The landing is a spine-jarring, crunching OOOOMPH that leaves your hands tingling on the steering wheel and your spectacles, if you wear them, on the very tip of your nose.

This is Formula JCB Racing, Britain's newest cult activity, which is attracting a growing following of participants eager to test their competitive qualities at the controls of the extraordinarily versatile £40,000 machines.

At present racing is organised in a remote and windy field high on the Kentish North Downs near Maidstone, but soon the rising whine of competing JCB 3CX Turbo Powershifts will be heard at a second location, in the West Midlands, as word spreads of the mud-plugging fun they offer.

JCB racing may sound tame to those who have been stuck behind the yellow giants as they lumber between building sites, but one circuit dispels any such thoughts.

"We're letting you loose on a piece of highly expensive, very heavy machinery which can do an awful lot of damage," Lee Cooper, the chief instructor, told a group of us in his pre-race safety pep talk.

Mr Cooper knows a bit about JCBs. He is the leader of the national JCB display team that tours Britain performing apparently impossible mechanical feats, and his boss, plant hire millionaire Hugh Edeleanu, owns 1,500 of them.

Peter Birkett joins the JCB racers for a heavyweight and hair-raising session on a mud-spattered circuit

"So be warned that this is a non-contact sport," he continued sternly. "One shunt can cause damage worth thousands and remember in these conditions that when you steer left or right it doesn't necessarily mean you'll go left or right. You might go straight on."

We had come from all over southern England for the day-long session billed as "The Ultimate Challenge on Earth". There were 20 of us, including Tom Sartain, a bank manager from Chelmsford, Ian Hindmarsh, a Royal Navy Chief Petty Officer from Portsmouth, Carol Jamieson, a works cook from Rochester, and James Crawford, a book-seller from central London.

There was a group from a McAlpine road construction project; Baz, a builder from East Sussex; and Tim, a civil engineer from Perth, Western Australia. And then there was Steve Baxter, a landscape gardener from Ruislip.

Mr Baxter admitted from



Three competitors at the starting line prepare for a fierce battle across the mud

the start that he had driven an excavator before "once or twice". What the group did not discover until later was that he is such a JCB nut that he has christened his son John Charles to bless him with the initials of the machines he holds so dear.

Racing comprises a series of heats in which three or four drivers battle to be first around a rugged circuit that includes a daunting 8ft deep, water-filled pit, and a deep, mud-sloped bank.

There is also a devilishly tricky manoeuvre involving picking up a road cone with the excavator's bucket and carrying it at top speed around a field before dropping it off again.

Penalty points are imposed for infringements such as failing to manage the cone, hitting fences or getting stuck in the pit. The three fastest drivers, with the least penalties, go through to a hard-fought final.

Exactly as Lee Cooper predicted — going straight on rather than left or right.

Tim won the heat with Baz a good second, but a glance at the leader board during the barbecue lunch showed that none of us was in the same league, as the Damon Hill wannabes in other heats.

Sartain, urbane and unfluffed, had quickly established his credentials by winning a heat, to the delight of his wife Anita, who bought him the day out as a Christmas present. Carol Jamieson, too, had stormed round ahead of the field in a tour de force that surprised onlookers and astonished herself. Hindmarsh, just back from sea, came second, leaving Crawford a poor third.

But the real heroes were Wes Creighton and John Devlin, both from the McAlpine party, and, of course, Baxter, for whom winning had assumed a priority seldom seen off the Grand Prix circuit. He ended up with the trophy following a stewards' enquiry.

The prize was a handsome, framed citation presented by Mr Cooper and chief marshal Louise Edeleanu, who handed the rest of us certificates declaring that we had put in a "praiseworthy performance".

"I couldn't have looked us in the eye if he hadn't won," said Baxter's partner Anne Marie, who had given him the day out as a birthday present. "The journey home would have been a nightmare."

● JCB racing is organised by HB Services, The Whitewall Centre, Whitewall Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 4DZ (01634 201411). A day's racing costs £60 per person, and for groups of five or more, one person goes free.



Close, but no cigar: Peter Birkett with his certificate

This writer gave his all from the start, in which drivers are required to run to the machine, turn on the engine and coax the JCB forward by manipulating a complex steering column gearstick.

After a dodgy moment in which the machine took a savage backwards lurch, the 95-horsepower Perkins engine howled as we finally departed in hot pursuit of Tim and Baz.

Out in the field the excitement grew as, somehow, the cone was successfully snatched and we raced on with Tim out of sight ahead and Baz bumping so much that his hand had felt off.

Take-off came on the race back across the field, when the machine hit some undetected corrugations and rose up, front wheels followed by back ones, like a primeval goliath. The immediate feeling is surprise, followed by the terrifying crump of crash-down.

Then there was the pit to contend with: an abyss to be descended gingerly in first gear and then charged through, flat out in order to slither up the steep incline on the other side. The slalom followed with the JCB doing

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CHANGING TIMES

ON THE SPOT: SOUTH SUFFOLK

Rural recommendations

The place: the bridge over the River Stour at Flatford. The view: the river meanders beyond the bridge and the scene opens out into flat meadowland. On the left is Bridge Cottage, a 16th-century thatched house with a garden leading down to the river. Ahead is an island leading to a lock and to its left, Flatford Mill and the black Granary building.

Afficionados: Constable enthusiasts and those on arts and crafts courses at the Field Study Centre.

Appeal: sights that inspired Constable.

Historical interest: *The Hay Wain*, which Constable painted in 1821, depicts the peaceful scene at Flatford, where his father bought the mill in 1765. The cottage, owned by Willy Lott the farmer featured in Constable's prints, is now a study centre for arts and crafts courses. The Granary, a fully operational steam-powered mill until the 1920s, displays a collection of rural tools used by blacksmiths and thatchers.

Best time to visit: on a crisp, spring-like day, off-season.

OS ref: 078/332 on sheet 169.

How to get there: follow signs from A12. From the car park walk along footpath towards the bridge.

Also nearby: boats for hire on the river.

DEBORAH KING

سكزا من الاجل

هكذا من الأصيل

'One minute she'll be dragged through the mud and trampled by a horse, the next she'll be cooking a cordon-bleu meal'

Superwoman, alias farmer's wife

Fiona Waterer is one of those farmer's wives who makes me feel lazy and cowardly. I've met her on and off at horse shows over the years, and each time she has had an even more shudderingly horrible story to tell about her life.

There was the time she chose to give birth at home — on a plastic silage sheet with a feed-bucket on hand for the afterbirth. And the time, a little later on, when, still breastfeeding her new baby, and with a toddler in tow, she was left alone on the farm while her husband went off to do a week's forestry work. She was supposed to feed and muck out all the animals while he was away — including a vast barn full of housed cows — and as her husband was leaving he was struck by an afterthought: "Oh, by the way," he said, "I've just killed two pigs. They're hanging in the outhouse. You'll have to butcher them and bung them in the freezer." (Having no idea how to do this she was forced to improvise with a diagram from a cookery book.)

When I've talked to country wives from earlier generations they have relished telling grim stories, too, about bizarre tasks they have coped with. Hand-weeding acres of wheat, popping warble-maggots from the backs of cows — even being a slave to a room full of cheeses, unable to stray off the farm for more than a few hours because each one had to be turned twice a day. But last night, when I went to see Fiona at her farm at Chittlehampton, on the edge of the Taw Valley in North Devon, it occurred to me that life has genuinely got a lot harder for farmers' wives in the UK. She and her husband Jonathan farm 130 acres together, and although they rear beef suckler cows and sell hay, silage and thatching reed, their main income now comes from the Shire horses they started as a sideline. They work the land with Shires, run driving and

handling courses, break other people's heavy horses to work, do weddings and wagon-trips — and tie all this in with a bed and breakfast business. While Fiona talked, her children, Harry, 7, and Camilla, 3, chattered to her and swung about like monkeys on her arms and legs, and she couldn't sit down — even though it was eight o'clock at night she was making beds and vacuum cleaning, getting ready for the next lot of visitors. "My mother had the nice jobs on the farm," she said wearily. "She looked after children,

DOWN TO EARTH



LUCY PINNEY

cooked lunches and didn't go outside except to pick up eggs, feed lambs and rear a few calves. Now wives are expected to do the VAT, cope with a mass of paperwork, drive tractors and do heavy labouring. And since farming is gradually turning into a service industry rather than a productive one, opening your house to the public is becoming part of the job."

The work women do on the farm has certainly altered. They may always have done some outdoor tasks, but in the past these were not as physically demanding.

While men threw bales six feet in the air off the end of a pitchfork, women would wrestle them into position inside a hot barn; while farmers did the shearing, their wives and daughters would be given the duller job of rolling fleeces.

On farms such as the Waterers', the work can no longer be divided this way. They can't afford to employ anyone, so when there is a two-man job — breaking a 16-hand horse never before touched by a human, for example — Fiona has to help. It has led her into a queer, schizophrenic lifestyle. One minute she'll be dragged through the mud and trampled by an enraged horse, and the next she'll be cooking a cordon-bleu meal for a dozen visitors in her spotless 16th-century farmhouse. Like any working mother in the city,

she feels guilty about not spending more time with her children. "Women have gone too far down the equality road. Wives are expected to do everything on the farm now, and the burden gets greater and greater. Even our family life gets cast aside by the need to work."

On the other hand, she lives in a beautiful, rolling landscape dotted with ancient woodland, and she loves being with animals. One memorable evening last summer she and her husband were pitching wheat for thatching reed, and when they'd finished the reed they climbed on top and gazed at the stars.

"Jonathan was just starting to feel romantic when a jet from RAF Chivenor shot past and we had to scramble down and grab the horses before they bolted." If feminism, mountainous EU paperwork, the collapse of the beef industry and the desperate need to diversify have all made the role of the farmer's wife harder, some compensations remain. As Fiona puts it: "I still think it's a privilege to be able to work with my husband — and you can't say I lead a dull life."

Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters, of all kinds. Address them to: Country Life, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.

A hunting ban could mean the demise of Patey riding hats — and a fine family business. Alan Hamilton reports



Hats off: Trevor Campan at company headquarters

Major headache for a top hatter

You never see the Queen with one, and you rarely see Camilla Parker Bowles without one. While the monarch constantly sets a bad example by taking to the saddle with no more protection for her regal head than a Hermes scarf, Mrs Parker Bowles would not dream of riding to hounds without her made-to-measure Patey.

It is a strange anomaly that the Rolls-Royce of riding hats is hand-made in a tiny south-London workshop not a hundred yards from the headquarters of the Labour Party, an organisation seemingly bent on outlawing the very sport that keeps Patey's head above water.

If hunting goes, who then will wear its hats? The collapse of the Patey would drag down with it such innocent bystanders as governors-general, major-generals, Chelsea pensioners, Lord Mayors of London, Yeomen Warders of the Tower, carriage drivers of the Royal Mews, and several Danish professors. They all, you see, have an exotic taste in hats.

Patey employs 15 people in a devil's kitchen filled with vats of treacle-dark shellac and flint-rings glowing red on open gas ranges. Robots, mass production and computers have no place in a company that

survives in the tiny niche market of hand-carved headgear. A filing cabinet upstairs contains the precise skull measurements of every one of the 15,000 customers who has passed through its doors since it was founded in the 1950s.

"Riding hats account for three-quarters of our business," explains Trevor Campan, the managing director. "If we lost that, we could never sustain our other specialist lines."

Patey makes 1,500 hunting hats a year, at around £230 each. They are not the mass-produced safety helmets that all riders are now exhorted to wear, but Campan insists they give a good measure of protection to an unseated rider because, being custom-fitted to the individual's head, they will never fall off. "Even the best safety hat is of little use if it moves on the head," he says.

But it is the exotic fourth quarter of Patey's business that would be under threat if Campan failed to find new markets for his riding hats in a hunched Britain. Yeomen Warders would have to look elsewhere for their dark blue bonnets; Chelsea Pensioners for their day and dress caps, and the Prince of Wales for his polo helmet.

The core of a Patey hat is its solid body, made from sheets of linen coated with shellac,



Handcrafted hats take shape in Patey's small south London workshop, where 15 members of staff are employed



Hands off the Patey, matey: Camilla Parker Bowles; a beekeeper; Margaret Thatcher and a London town crier

known in the trade as coodle, which dries hard and is then shaped with hot irons over head-shaped wooden moulds. Several layers of the stuff welded together make a surprisingly strong helmet. On top of the basic body goes an infinite variety of trimmings. Probably the most unlikely

order on the books is from Switzerland, a nation not known for maritime adventure, for an admiral's cocked hat. The customer is an amateur military historian, and, for reasons best known to himself, wants an exact replica of a piece of Royal Navy headgear from 1835, which

will cost him £700. Patey has had to call in the Imperial War Museum as fashion consultant.

Sir Rex Hunt, governor of the Falklands at the time of the invasion, had his plumed hat made by Patey. There is still the trickle of a trade in such hats of old empire, where the leathers alone cost £100, but these days such an item is as likely to be destined for a production of *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Stirling Moss was another Patey customer in the 1950s, when he raced in his trademark white crash helmet. Recently he ordered a replica, and the company has developed a line in 1950s crash helmets finished and varnished to look like wood.

"You wouldn't be allowed to race in one of these," says Campan, "but they're quite popular at vintage racing car shows." If you can afford £50,000 for a Jaguar XK120 in mint condition, you can afford the extra £600 for the wood-finish helmet; it matches the dashboard, you see. For a mere £60, you could have a Patey hand-made morboard, which are curiously popular among the academic community of Denmark. The workshop not only makes headgear; it is also a hat

hospital where tired titfers can be given a new lease of life, and one of the few places left where you can have a proper traditional silk top hat refurbished.

Patey has its own line in black toppers, but does not claim them to be silk. In fact, they are rabbit-fur felt, and there is still some demand for them from doorknobs at City institutions and posh hotels, carriage-driving enthusiasts and from undertakers.

What Patey does not see much of these days is the bowler — although there was one recently in for repair from a coachman at the Royal Mews. Yet there is still the occasional order for a new one; stewards at county agricultural shows still wear them. And remember Steed's bowler in *The Avengers*, that paragon of 1960s TV camp? Patey has just delivered a new bowler for the remake, which will sit on the head of Ralph Fiennes.

But if the handbuilt hat trade is not greatly expanding, our heads are. The average size of a silk topper used to be six and seven-eighths; now the average British skull is between seven and seven-and-a-quarter. The poor level of argument that occasionally enters the hunting debate indicates that the contents of the average British skull have not always caught up.

Battle that must be won

Some 200,000 protesters march into London tomorrow. Jonathan Young explains why he'll be among them

One of the biggest uprisings in British history happens tomorrow, when at least 200,000 men, women and children will converge on London, their path illuminated by a chain of beacons lit to warn of the Spanish Armada.

They are marching to save our countryside, and, with it, our culture. For they believe that our national character is shaped by our shared inheritance of sea, pasture, river and moorland, all crammed together in unique beauty; and that unless we act now, we will be left diminished forever.

The countryside's vision is an inherited code, enacted today for the sake of tomorrow. It includes greeting people in the street, helping neighbours, public service, going to church, keeping rivers clean, planting trees for our great-grandchildren and, crucially, respecting the right of others to lead different lives.

Country people just want to be left alone. We ask no more. But we have been selected as the ideological battleground for urban single-issue pressure groups and politicians answerable only to town electorates. And as the number of country-dwellers shrinks, the problem grows.

Even in once-rural counties, the electoral clout of the cities mushrooms. When the Tories ruled, there was at least a folk memory of their duty to rural areas. Under the present Government, which views the countryside as the last redoubt of conservatism, even this has gone.

Country people have been effectively disenfranchised, and the process will worsen if the Government proceeds with plans to bury the land under 4.4 million new houses — even though our population is stable.

With no one to speak for us, we have become soft targets. Farmers are no longer depicted as feeders of the nation but as purveyors of poison, from killer beef to bacteria-riddled milk. They cannot even, it seems, be trusted to advise the Minister of Agriculture, who appointed only one farmer to his advisory panel.

The leadership of the Ramblers' Association accuses landowners of waging a "hate campaign" because they defend their right to say who comes on to their private property — the keystone of a democratic state. And then, of

course, there are the animal lovers. In the cities, where many people do not know their neighbours, a faithful, unquestioning companion, be it dog or cat, is endowed with human feelings so that the relationship can be imagined to be reciprocal.

In the countryside we do not delude ourselves that animals have our emotions or rights. We may love our pigs, luscious-lashed Jerseys and bantams but accept that eventually they will be food for us and for our town cousins. We admire the fox, but know that his tribe kills ground-nesting birds, some 200,000 lambs annually, chickens and piglets. We kill foxes because we are the only predator capable of restoring the balance that man, as a whole, has upset.

Hunting is one way of achieving that balance. It is swifter than snoring or shooting them with bird shot. Birds such as magpies and cormorants are flourishing unnaturally, and we need to control their numbers if they are not to damage other species, such as songbirds and native fish species.

This is plain common sense, but reason is crashing into a concrete wall of sentiment, currently focused on the attempt to ban hunting. We point out that the areas of highest biodiversity in this country are managed for field sports, be it hunting, shoot-duty to rural areas. Under the present Government, which views the countryside as the last redoubt of conservatism, even this has gone.

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Pro-hunt campaigners in London last November



At Patey, 1,500 riding hats are manufactured each year. Each is tailor-made to fit the skull measurements of clients

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Page No. 27/16/98

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WEEKEND COURSES AND ACTIVITIES

Back up your posture

Spring walking weekend: Painting spring flowers. At the Field Studies Council, Flatford Mill Centre, East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex (01206 296283). Price £105 residential, £82 non-residential. Countryside walks and talks. Food and wine. At the Hill Residential Centre, Abergavenny, Wales (01495 333777). Price from £85 to £100 per day, inclusive. The Civil War in the west of England: Rediscovering the landscape. At Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset (01460 55866). From £110, inclusive. Backcare. At the Earmley Concourse, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 670392). Price £142 residential, £98 non-residential. Working weekends and holidays with the National Trust. Help to preserve Britain's natural heritage. Call 0891 517751. Prices from £45 a week. Great American collections. Study famous European paintings now held in American collections. Also garden designs for beginners. Both at the Maryland Residential College, Woburn, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire (0125 292901). From £74. History of the visual arts — the Renaissance. Forty years fighting the arms race. Writing historical fiction: Jane Austen and the country house. At Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Price £159 residential, £69 non-residential.



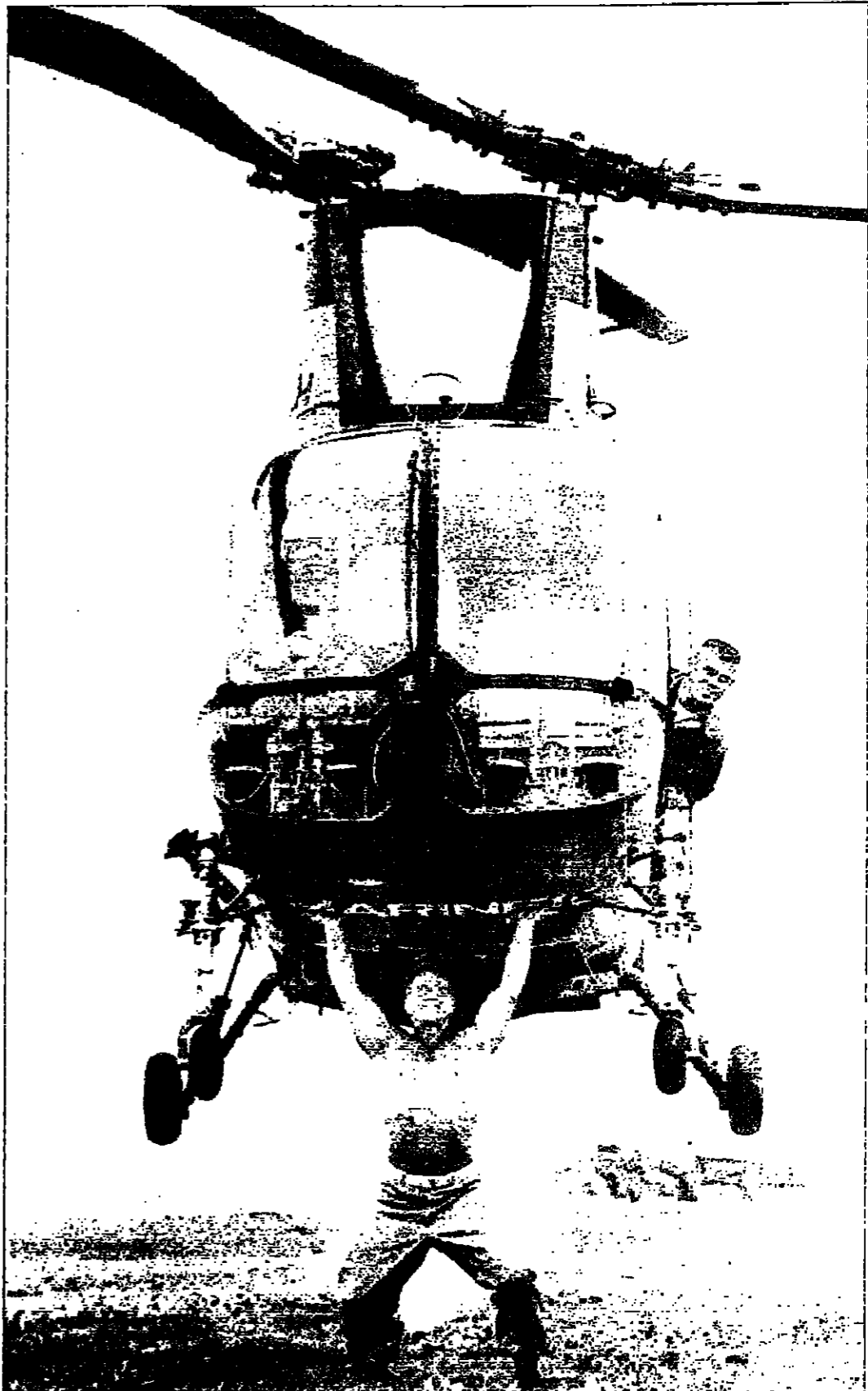
Forty years of fighting the arms race, a course at Missenden Abbey in Buckinghamshire next weekend

Absciling, climbing, white-water rafting and canoeing, bridge and gourmet cooking. In Wales with Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 850083). Price, full-board, from £150 (activities weekend) to £175 (bridge in Ludlow). Better swimming. Lectures and pool sessions at the Earmley Concourse, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 670392). From £142 residential, £98 non-residential. Winter skills and mountain navigation. Short, intensive courses for hillwalkers. At the Snowgoose Mountain Centre, Corpach, Fort William, Scotland (01397 772467). Price from £70-£90 for two days. Scottish country dancing. At Belstead House, Ipswich, Suffolk (01473 686321). From £75. Walk the Ridgeway Path. French conversation. Landscape and

garden history. At Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Bucks (01494 890295). Price from £159 residential, £69.20 non-residential. Sing jazz: A social history of Britain's railways, 1825-1914: Making dolls house dolls. All at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). From £114 residential. Blacksmithing: Craft handtools. Short stories: Glass engraving. Life drawing. At the West Dean College, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 811031). Price £150 residential, £97 non-residential. Yoga: A pianist's journey through the 19th century. At the Alston Hall Residential College, Preston, Lancashire (01772 784661). Price £75 with tuition. Tuition in Greek or Russian. At the Brasshouse Language Centre, 50 Sheepcote Street, Birmingham (0121-643 0114). Price from £107 residential, £65 non-residential. Railways of Wales: Jane Austen at Bath: Improve your drawing: Practical photography. All at the Hill Residential Centre, Abergavenny, Wales (01495 333777). Price from £88-£98 per course, inclusive. The birds in your garden: Bridge for improvers: Ships, sand and sea: Italian opera. A varied selection

this weekend at Knuston Hall Residential College, Irchester, Northants (01933 312104). Price from £89 per course, inclusive. Classic car weekends. At the Lygon Arms, Broadway, Worcester (01386 852255). Chauffeur-driven excursions through the Cotswolds in classic cars, visiting museums and gardens. From £780 for two nights half-board based on two people sharing. Mahler Symphonies No 1-4: Human origins The artist's vision: The outer and inner eye. At the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price £120 per course, inclusive. The Revolutions of 1848. A day school to reassess events 150 years ago in France, Germany and Italy. At the University of Oxford, Rewley House (01865 270308). Price £30.50 with lunch.

Fittleworth, Pulborough, West Sussex (01798 865306) From £114 residential, £90 non-residential. Touch wood, the survival story of old superstitions: The history of parks and gardens: Dowling: A voice workshop. At Knuston Hall, Irchester (01933 312104). Price £120 per course, inclusive. Health and fitness. At the Priory Hotel, Weston Road, Bath (01225 331922). Price £220 for the weekend, including dinner. B&B. use of facilities. Fresh air and fine houses. A local history weekend in Essex and Suffolk, with Peter Lawrence, at the Field Study Centre, Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, Essex (01206 296283). Price £105 residential, £82 non-residential. Garden appreciation: Medieval art and architecture: Spring into art: Lace. At the Hill Residential College, Abergavenny (01495 333777). Price from £88-£98 inclusive. Look out for mammals. Badgers, otters, dormice and other small mammals are the subject of this course run by the Mammal Society at the Orleton Field Centre, Pembroke (01646 661225). Price £90 residential, £50 non-residential.



How to take care of your back and lift properly, at the Earmley Concourse in Chichester, March 6-8

ROBIN NEILLANDS

SHOPAROUND

SHOPAROUND CONTINUES ON PAGE 24

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An end to a postman's pet hate

The tooth and claw terrors of a modern postman's round are never over. Recently, there was Snoopy, the High Wycombe cat, whose daily Spitfire-style swoops on local mailman, Colin Summerfield, called for urgent redirection of the post.

Then there was Pel, the albatross from Romford, whose attack on Alan Wright, a postman — severely damaging his right hand — has just cost the dog's owner £14,252 in damages.

Out of 6,209 animal attacks on postmen and postwomen last year, 99 per cent involved dogs. The Royal Mail believes that many owners do not take the problem seriously enough.

"Too many people tend to view dogs attacking postmen as a bit of a cartoon joke, although some of our staff can be badly hurt, suffering injuries which leave them permanently scarred," a Royal Mail spokesman says.

Spray repellents and ultrasonic alarms are two new measures that the Royal Mail is encouraging staff to use to protect themselves against aggressive dogs. But perhaps they should not hold their breath. My own local postman, Ken, who has fallen foul of a rottweiler and five Jack Russells — "the postman's ultimate nightmare dog" — says that he tried an ultrasonic alarm on a persistently offending terrier. "Nothing happened and he kept coming," Ken says. "The best use for an alarm might be to throw it at the dog."

Council dog wardens are also being asked to help postmen improve their "canine handling" skills. The Royal Mail says: "Often one of the simplest bits of advice is to try to make friends with an aggressive dog." But, as Ken says: "Have you tried this at home? Do you still have any fingers left?"

It seems that the Royal Mail is still a fair way off finding an

It is possible to train dogs to welcome, rather than attack, the delivery man,
Carol Price writes



effective solution to dog aggression. And it is not alone. All over Britain, anguished owners of aggressive dogs are going to the clinics of behaviour experts in record numbers, desperate to find a way to curb their pet's excesses. Thanks to the Dangerous Dogs Act, with heavy penalties for unruly dogs and their owners, having an aggressive dog can lead to more than just

Beware of the dog: postmen have always known that size is no indication of temperament — terriers are notorious

"dog aggression is seen as something that can be divided into a number of different types, each with a different genetic component." Here are just some of the types that you can choose from when seeking a solution to your pet's problem: nervous aggression, territorial aggression, dominance aggression and pain-associated aggression. Suddenly, you begin to realise why canine behaviourists are so busy. Colette Kase, behaviour adviser to the National Canine Defence League, believes that misconceptions about dog aggression do not help. "Many people view it as some evil phenomenon in dogs, when it is not," she says. "For dogs, aggression is perfectly normal. They don't view it as socially inappropriate — only we do." Other people mistakenly believe that the behaviour is

limited to certain breeds, failing to realise that most animals behave in that way because it is rewarding. Once dogs have learnt that it can get them what they want — the departure of a perceived threat

or their owner's full attention — they will try it again. The key to tackling aggressive behaviour, says David Appleby, author of *Ain't Misbehavin' — A Good Behaviour Guide For Family*

Dogs, is to ensure it is less rewarding. Like postman Ken, he does not hold out much hope for sprays or alarms. But he offers the following solution: "When postmen go out on their rounds, they should try taking some titbits with them. As soon as they get to a problem dog's house, they should throw the treat down before the mail. Eventually, the dog won't be wanting the postman to go away — it will be looking forward to him arriving."

So if your dog starts to get fatter and look wistfully out of the window for Mr Postie's bike, you'll know why. ● *Ain't Misbehavin' — A Good Behaviour Guide For Family Dogs, David Appleby, Broadview Books, £9.95.* ● Further help: Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors, 01386 751151, or send an sae to: Association of Pet Dog Trainers, Greengarth, Maddox Lane, Bookham, Surrey KT23 3RT.

KEEPING THE PEACE

- Aggression can be a problem in all dogs, not just those with a reputation for bad behaviour, such as Jack Russells or alsatians. All dogs are individuals, with temperaments influenced by genes, environment and past experiences.
- Vets can advise whether an aggressive male dog should be castrated. He or she can also refer the dog to a behaviour counsellor.
- Don't rule out the effect that diet, health and medical treatments can have on a dog's mood and subsequent behaviour.
- Getting puppies socialised early with people and animals can minimise aggressive tendencies in later life. But do not expect dogs to be saints — they must be allowed some peaceful personal space. Children, especially, should be taught that things such as beds and food bowls can be instinctive zones of canine defence.
- Never retaliate against dog aggression with physical punishment. This can be highly dangerous with bigger breeds and it could destroy trust and ruin the chances of a good future bond with your dog.

A VET WRITES

Q I have a seven-year-old whippet who has been diagnosed as having chronic rhinitis. X-rays show slight bone changes in her nasal passages. Swabs are negative. She coughs up large amounts of clear mucus when she gets up after a rest. Can anything be done and where can I find a specialist to treat her?

A Ask your vet to arrange a second opinion with a specialist. Your vet knows your dog. Proceeding this way means the specialist is fully informed and knows what treatments have been tried. If you find someone yourself, he or she could take longer to find a solution — or be misled — because all the information wasn't passed on. Your vet won't be offended by a request for someone else's experience.

Q My grandson and his wife are expecting their first baby in three months. They have a very boisterous spaniel. He's allowed freedom of the house and sleeps in their bedroom. They are concerned, as I am, about the dog's reaction when the baby arrives. Their vet has suggested shutting the dog in the kitchen with a bed for three hours every day and making him sleep there at night.

I feel this may create a jealous dog. As the baby will be in the nursery with a baby alarm, surely it would be better to close the nursery door and allow the dog to carry on with his normal routine? I've always believed dogs become protective of a new baby.

A I agree with your vet. Make the dog feel a bit miffed before the great day. Then, when baby arrives, it's made clear to the dog that he's back in favour. He should be given a titbit when baby is fed, and taken for a walk when baby takes the air. You should convince the dog that life is much better when a baby arrives. Then he'll look forward to the next one.

Q Our 12-year-old daughter, Gemma, is horse mad. She has her own pony, Frederick, and reads every word in the "horse" magazines, as well as attending pony-keeping lectures. She comes home with a host of expensive ideas about worming, vaccination, mineral supplements and "tonics" — not to mention bits, surgical shoes and rags. We don't want the pony to suffer, but how much of this is necessary for a part-Emoor pony living in a field?

A Regular worming, and shoeing, plus an annual vaccination against tetanus and flu are essentials. If Gemma and Frederick go to gymkhanas or shows held on racecourses, a certificate, in a passport form, identifying Fred and verifying "in date" vaccination is a *sine qua non*. Talk to your vet about the frequency of worming. Treating a pony too often can create its own problems. An Emoor pony shouldn't need a rug. Solid hedges plus his thick coat give adequate protection and, in winter, plenty of good hay should supply all his needs. A pony's feet need attention about every eight weeks: usually no more than removing the shoes, paring the hooves and putting them, or a new set, on again.

JAMES ALLCOCK
 Write to *The Times Vet*,
 1 Fenington Street, London
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ADOPT ME
TOBY (above) is a good-natured crossbred terrier who is waiting for a dedicated new owner. His last owner can no longer keep him and he needs a loving home.

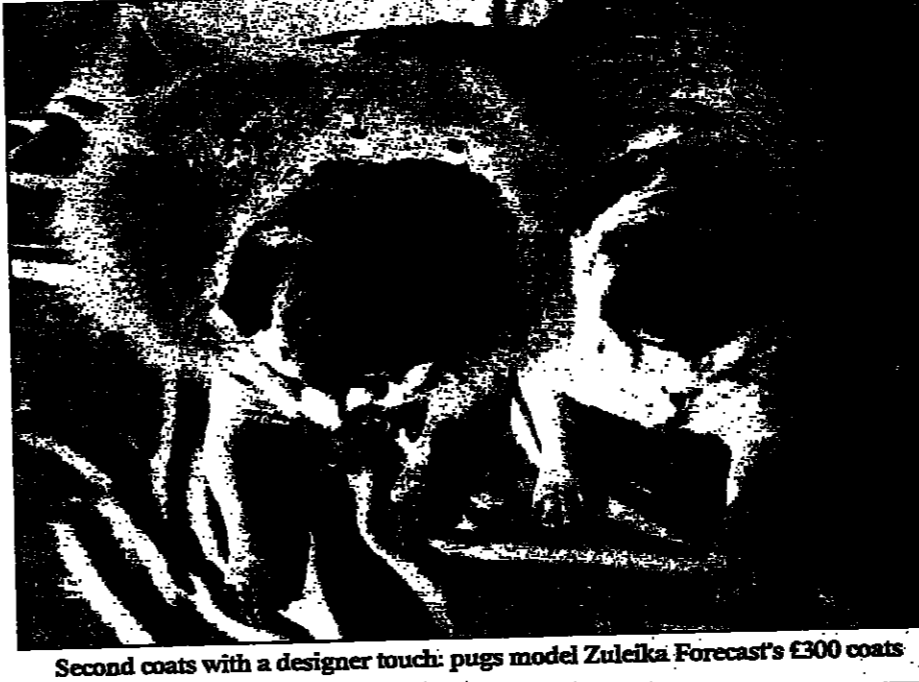
Toby has a tan, wire-haired coat. He gets on well with other dogs, but is not particularly keen on other kinds of animals.
 If you would like to adopt Toby, please contact the RSPCA on 01642 724016.

The jury's still out on London Fashion Week, but here's the proof that British haute couture is going to the dogs

All done up like a dog's dinner

Not all the models strutting their stuff this week are of the two-legged variety. London Fashion Week might be winding down, but two pugs will be warming up for their modelling debut, as they show off the latest designer coats from animal "couturier" Zuleika Forecast. Made of pre-shrunk felt with traces of silk, the doggie designer wear is embellished with marabou feathers, diamonds and pearls to give it the exclusive look that she believes animals deserve.

Ms Forecast's designs can be seen today and tomorrow at the Olympia Fine Art and Antiques fair as part of the new Modernground exhibition of contemporary design. The exhibition will include other, non-pet, creations by such well-established designers as Tom Dixon, Bowles and Linares, John Makepeace and Azumi, as well as some of Britain's top jewellery and accessory makers. For more information on the coats, call Modernground on 0171-510 1021; for tickets to the fair, call 0171-244 2219.



Second coats with a designer touch: pugs model Zuleika Forecast's £300 coats

As well as making coats for wealthy pug owners — the coats cost from £300 — she dresses her own pets in her creations. Her cat, she says, has provided much of the inspiration for the outfits; it is particularly fond of "the smell of fleece, and loves feathers."

LISA GRAINGER

ANIMALS & ACCESSORIES

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كوزا من الاجل



SAS-trained John Geddes, "close protection specialist" to his £500-a-day clients, who have ranged from a Saudi princess on a £30,000 shopping outing to movie stars and a porn publisher. He knows that the job could cost him his life

He will watch over you - at a price

He's a cool and ruthless professional. Bill Frost gets the chilling low-down from a real-life close protection specialist

Force of habit compels John Geddes to gaze at every table in turn when he arrives at one of London's most expensive restaurants. He's trained to look for potential aggressors — a familiar face from a security file or a furtive movement. Innocent diners who inadvertently catch his eye look disconcerted and stop eating; there is something very cold, almost reptilian, in that stare.

"There's no one here who presents an obvious threat, but you can never be too sure," says the soldier turned professional bodyguard. "If I was minding you, I would already have set up a team at the entrance to the restaurant and would myself be the very last line of defence if anyone got through. If it came on top, I would put myself between you and the assailant, even if that was to cost my life. That's the job I do."



Kray security: Dave Courtney

his clients are Arab princes, showbusiness figures and international businessmen. They all have something to fear: terrorism, kidnapping or simply that mad person in the crowd with an irrational grudge. They can also afford his fees: £500-a-day plus expenses. His clients must be willing to take orders; he'll brook no interference from "a principal". They do what he tells them, or the deal is off. John Geddes — a *nom de guerre* — chooses the restaurant where he meets. The establishment is among the most expensive in London but he offers no alternative venue. "Sure, I suppose you get used to giving instructions, it becomes a habit. But sometimes lives depend on the other person's willingness to obey instantly."



A bodyguard shoves reporters out of the way of Noel Gallagher in yet another airport encounter

name, rank and other details to confirm service with the SAS. He leaves the table while his credentials are checked with a contact by mobile telephone. Returning a quarter of an hour later, he appears neither pleased that his story checked out nor annoyed that it might ever have

been doubted. "You learn to be ic-cold about everything. The only time you lose patience is when the client starts bucking orders and making stupid suggestions. Dodi Fayed's behaviour on the night he died with Diana and their drunken driver provides the perfect and most tragic example of what I am talking about. He took charge and from that moment the Princess didn't have a chance. "It was Dodi's idea to send a decoy car out in advance. The second vehicle should have swung in behind their Mercedes to keep the photographers at bay by blocking the way — that's basic."

"And as for Henri Paul, what the hell was he employed for? Any organisation worth its salt weeds out people with drink and drug problems. "If I had been in charge that night, Paul would have been out of that car — he didn't know a gearstick from a crowbar in that state — and Dodi would have been told to stay quiet and leave it to a professional. "It is difficult to tell these people what to do sometimes: they are used to taking that role with others. They are used to bullying — you just have to be a bigger and more convincing bully, and for me that comes quite easy. "You don't let an amateur

surgeon carry out a triple by-pass operation, so why let an amateur be your bodyguard?"

Geddes, who was wounded during the Falklands War while serving with the Parachute Regiment, says his experience of combat and covert operations has enabled him to predict and contain any potential risk. Every job has a different level of danger and he lays his plans accordingly. "London at the moment I would put at low risk, depending on the client of course. Paris is quite a bit higher, as is much of Europe. There is a continuing terrorist threat, particularly from the Arab world, and organised crime hits are of course commonplace in Italy and Russia."

"If I were guarding a client in Africa or South America I would hope to get weapons for the team — it's much easier in those places. Elsewhere in the world, getting hold of the permits can be difficult and expensive."

He was recently guarding an American porn publisher when news reached him that a \$1million contract had been taken out on the client. "For a while that was a little unsettling — I needed eyes in the back of my head. But the guy survived the threat and later the hit was called off. "Had he been scared, though?

"Well, no one likes the thought of being stalked by the Mafia, guys who will do anything to get through you to the target. But you don't have time to be frightened and if you did you wouldn't be doing your job properly."

Geddes has experienced fear, though, the paralysing terror which only those caught under an accurate and sustained artillery barrage can know. "We were under the most intense fire I have ever experienced," he recalls with a shudder that for a moment makes him appear a mere mortal too.

He recovers his composure swiftly as the waiter appears at the table. "Hotels and hotel restaurants are delicate to secure — it really is a case of instant threat assessment."

"How do you tell if the guy approaching the table where the famous actor is sitting wants an autograph or has a grudge and a concealed weapon? Well, it's training and instinct: you either have it or you don't."

He admits that things can go wrong: "If someone gets through to our table and I have to beat the crap out of him, then something has gone seriously wrong. In an ideal world I get you out while someone else takes the perpetrator out."

"Of course, it has happened. There was one night I was looking after a well-known personality in Annabel's and out of the crowd some guy just lunged for the client's throat."

"I had to deal with him before I could hustle the principal out. A quick strike to the solar plexus is usually enough."

Geddes must also exercise "the art of decorum", as he calls it. "Shopping in Harrods with a Saudi princess who is carrying £30,000 in cash you cannot afford to look obtrusive."

"You hold back, you watch, you look to left and right. Then you close up when people get close and may pose a threat — try that for a couple of hours in the Food Hall on your average Friday afternoon!"

He appears to take such contracts in his stride, though. "Remember, that's £500-per-day plus expenses."

At 42, he knows he is in the prime of his career. The work is very well-paid and contacts with the security service provide work when civilian clients are thin on the ground.

But there is a price to be paid for the experience and training which preceded his entry to the lucrative world of close protection. "I was lying on the sofa watching the television one day when my 13-year-old son scuttled into the room with his toy gun — I dived to the carpet and rolled for cover."

"When he looked at my face, he was frightened too and started crying. 'Dad, dad, I don't know what he saw there, but I can imagine. Nobody would want the dreams I have.'"



Madonna on guard

SO YOU WANT a bodyguard. This being a fairly unregulated industry, how do you ensure that you aren't hiring a villain to protect yourself and your family? Apart from the police, one first call might be to the International Professional Security Association. Paignton (01803 554849; fax 529203), which lists around 3,000 member firms worldwide and is the nearest thing there is to a trade association. It will provide advice on where to go to hire a bodyguard (known in the trade as a "close protection officer") and recommend firms which, in its view, vet and train their staff properly.

Companies recommended by the IPISA include Winguard (0171-622 1229), Excel (01372 726252), Corporate Solutions (0181-903 3222) and Task International (0171-582 9205) which has its own training establishment in Kent.

As a rule, the initial consultation, threat assessment and risk analysis are free, then the firm will give you a quotation. A bodyguard costs £15-£22 per hour or £250-£300 per day in the UK, plus expenses.

You will generally have to pay an initial deposit — one firm's spokesman was highly amused when asked whether he had difficulties with people not paying their bills: "It's not the sort of problem we have..."

And discretion is a much more important element of the business than you would think. (And I speak as one who was jostled abruptly off a cycle path in Hyde Park one morning by a bunch of large and anxious American joggers surrounding a small woman in dark glasses who turned out to be Madonna.)

ANGUS CLARKE



Hollywood's portrayal of personal protectors: strongmen Kevin Costner (left) and Clint Eastwood

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Cakes and ale all round



Ruth Gledhill enjoys a celebration in London of Ash Wednesday

IMMORTALISED in stained glass, William Caxton, the first English printer, and William Tyndale, 16th-century translator of the Bible, looked sternly down as we munched cakes and drank ale beneath them. This was the annual Ash Wednesday celebration which it is incumbent on the stationers of the City of London to perform, ever since it was so decreed in the will of bookseller John Norton, who died in 1612.

Headed by Alderman Clive Martin, chairman of Martin's Printing Group, the procession of liverymen from the Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers left St Paul's Cathedral for the service in the crypt of St Faith-under-St Paul's, in the crypt of St Paul's cathedral. We processed through the passage to the crypt, past a memorial tablet to Lord Thomson of Fleet (1844-1970), the newspaper magnate, and into the chapel for the wonderfully brief but full service.

The company has its own choir of enthusiastic amateurs, assembled annually for this event by liveryman Arthur Fosh. "Comfort O Lord the soul of thy servant. For unto thee do I lift up my soul," they sang. We were welcomed by the Dean of St Paul's, Dr John Moses, who opened with a confession of his anguish at having been forced to miss the pre-service cakes and ale, because he had been trapped in a chapter meeting for nearly five hours.

The company chaplain, Canon John Oates, Rector of St Bride's, Fleet Street, addressed us, noting that we were at "divine worship" in accordance with the will of Alderman John Norton, before we stood to sing the first of four wonderfully traditional hymns, beginning with *The Church's One Foundation*.

AT YOUR SERVICE

A five-star guide ★ MASTER: Alderman Clive Martin
ARCHITECTURE: Beautiful, white-painted chapel beneath When masterpiece. ★★★★★
SERMON: How we must all have an "inner heritage" in which to meet God. ★★★★★
MUSIC: Choir formed by liverymen's wives and others. ★★★★★
LITURGY: Traditional divine worship. ★★★★★
SPIRITUAL HIGH: Our just deserts. ★★★★★
PRE-SERVICE CARE: Wine, cakes and ale. ★★★★★

By this point I was in danger of nodding off but almost kept out of the chair at the Master's booming voice as he began. He described how the Holy Spirit led Jesus to be tempted in the desert. "Man shall not live by bread alone," he read. Then: "Get thee hence, Satan."

We were all wide awake by now for the Dean's sermon. Dr Moses did not disappoint, romping home in 11 minutes with a wise thesis on desert spirituality. And while we were, in the crypt of St Paul's, far removed from a real desert, it was possible for all of us to inhabit deserts of the spirit and of the mind. "For some it will be the desert of doubt, when faith is hard and prayer loses its meaning and God is known, not by his presence but by his absence," he said.

● *The Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers, Stationers' Hall, Ave Maria Lane, London EC4M 7DD (0171-288 2034).*



The Stationers and Newspaper Makers procession

A matter of life and death

Katherine Miller meets a priest waging a one-man crusade against suicide

For the 1,500-plus mourners who attended the funeral of the rock star Michael Hutchence in Sydney's Anglican Cathedral in November, the apparent suicide of a 36-year-old man with everything to live for left painful questions unanswered.

Everybody would almost certainly have agreed with the sentiment expressed in a note written on behalf of Hutchence's baby daughter, that her Daddy should "rest in peace". Yet for those raised in the orthodox tradition, which forbids the burial of suicides in hallowed ground, there would have been confusion.

Had Hutchence, as the liturgy suggested, slipped into the Lord's embrace? And what was it, the Dean of Sydney asked, about his life "that could be beyond bearing"? Such questions have been playing on the mind of the Reverend Chris Tadmans-Robins, a Church of England priest from Burford in Oxfordshire. For he believes that the Church should reassess its approach to suicide.



Rev Chris Tadmans-Robins: "The Church should open the subject of suicide as it did abortion and homelessness"

after the suicide three years earlier of his brother Renon, he set up Sash, a diocesan working party concerned with suicide and self-harm. He is currently researching a PhD on suicide as well as writing a handbook on the subject for clergy and laity.

The Church of England's last report on the issue, *Ought Suicide to be a Crime?*, was published in 1999. And with as many as 5,000 suicides and 150,000 attempted suicides in Britain each year, Tadmans-Robins says that it's time to make the Church look at the issue again.

He should know: brother Renon, in common with his two siblings, never escaped what Tadmans-Robins calls "the ravages of one's obligation to others and a sin against God. But Augustine was writing at a time when Christianity was under threat. The faithful, anxious to prove to their pagan neighbours the strength of their convictions, were dying in large numbers.

In this sense, Renon's case was a textbook suicide. Unable to break free from his childhood anxieties, he took sorrow in the usual props: marriage and status, as a deputy headmaster. When he lost both, he turned to alcohol and antidepressants. Although Renon had frequently discussed his wish to end it all with his brother, his death left Chris "totally unprepared".

The Church in which Tadmans-Robins trained keeps to the teachings of Augustine and Aquinas, for whom suicide was a denial of self-love, a rejection of one's obligation to others and a sin against God. But Augustine was writing at a time when Christianity was under threat. The faithful, anxious to prove to their pagan neighbours the strength of their convictions, were dying in large numbers.

The Church was hamstrung. Augustine saw their deaths as theatrical and a waste. "Although the Sixth Commandment is an injunction not to kill, Augustine did permit suicide by women to avoid rape by invading soldiers. Significantly, many of these women are now venerated by the Roman Catholic

Church. Nor are clergy helped by the Bible, which Tadmans-Robins says "neither condones nor condemns suicide". The Old Testament contains several instances where suicide was a matter of honour, such as King Saul, who fell on his sword, rather than face an ignominious capture.

Christian teaching is clear, however, that its followers must help those who are suffering. Sash aims to provide "human resources" to see those in need through a suicidal crisis. Volunteers operate at parish level and in theory at least are well placed to anticipate tragedy because of their familiarity with the circumstances of someone in trouble.



Grieving: Paula Yates and Hutchence's daughter

suicide victims and help them comfort the bereaved. Tadmans-Robins says that suicide should be discussed from the pulpit. He plans to send a flying squad of trained speakers into schools and colleges so that young people are made aware of potential suicides among friends.

There are nearly always signs that a person is vulnerable. They may be dishevelled, they cease to talk about their future, children lose interest in school. Adults often appear to be on a high because they've resolved to leave their miserable life. We must learn to recognise the symptoms.

Regrettably, the crusade has come too late for Renon. Tadmans-Robins still finds it painful to think about the loneliness of his brother's last hours, in which he drove to a remote spot and poisoned himself with carbon monoxide from the car's exhaust pipe. Tadmans-Robins says: "God understands the stresses of those who can't continue. My brother has moved to a place where he's found peace. I don't think for one moment that he's being punished."

Chris Tadmans-Robins welcomes correspondence from those who have made attempts on their life and who have been helped by Christian counselling. Readers can contact him at Diocesan Church House, North Hill, Burford, Oxon OX20 0NB (01993 82355).

foolish person who claimed that the Church has ever fully succeeded in that task — although at present there is much to be thankful for in renewed spirituality, burgeoning Alpha courses, and community engagement. In many places we have got things wrong — sometimes endangering, occasionally disgracefully. Like Peter, we are letting God down. What then is the way forward for the Church in these difficult times? In searching for an answer, it is sometimes the Church itself which distorts the image of what it is called to be. Today's Church, in many places, reaps a poor harvest from a stony soil. But if it keeps trusting in God, and is true to its purpose of teaching and caring, it can do no more. Like the Church, those who refuse to hear the message must one day answer before God. Meanwhile we persevere in faith, conscious of our weaknesses, but confident that, in the end, all shall be well.

● Nigel McCulloch is the Bishop of Wakefield.

Only faith will make all things well in the end

Crede

I was an inspired poet on the part of Jesus to choose Peter as the rock on which to build the Church. He might have chosen a disciple more obviously holy and reliable. But no: Peter is portrayed in the Gospels as an impetuous man who failed his Lord — most memorably when, within hours of pledging his loyalty, he denied Jesus three times.

Crede

judge the Gospel by such standards is a slur. For the Church to collude in such distortions of its purpose would be a heresy. The Church exists primarily to worship God. When it loses touch with God the result is inevitable and recognisable: hollow spirituality and an empty message.

Crede

Nigel McCulloch

Crede

will be frustrated, or deem as irrelevant, a Gospel which provides profound insights to life's great problems. The Church is also in being to care. At its best this means loving all people, simply because all are made in God's image; and caring especially for the poor and the marginalised.

Church services for tomorrow

Table listing church services for the following day across various denominations and locations, including BANGOR CATHEDRAL, ST ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL, and WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL.

SHOPAROUND

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Are you satisfied with your water? Advertisement for Pozzani Water Filters, featuring 'Black Box' and 'Scale Inhibitor' filters. Includes contact number 0800 0740290.

Men's clothing advertisement: "Does your size & potency matter?". Features 'Crede' brand clothing and contact number 0181 688 6323.

Pure Silk Shirts advertisement: "Exceptionally smart for only £15.95". Features 'Crede' brand shirts and contact number 0171 274 3887.

Disc

Handwritten text at the bottom of the page: "هذا من الاصل"



Bowled over on a summer holiday
Cricket · 28.29

THE TIMES TRAVEL

Get on track to see Europe
Trains · 32



Discovering gorillas in the rain

A trek in Uganda's impenetrable forest brings Jack Barker face to face with gorillas

After a while I began to feel like a gate-crasher at a royal cocktail party. Every time we got close, the gorillas would continue playing amongst themselves, throw the odd blank look in our direction, and then move off. For environmental reasons we obviously couldn't bribe them to take an interest in us, and common sense ruled out trying to tease a reaction out of them. Yelling "Yah boo two-tone Tessie" was obviously out. I began to feel subtly and politely excluded.

I was in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in southwest Uganda, sandwiched between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), the only easy place to see Mountain Gorillas.

Easy is a bit of a relative term. It's not called an impenetrable forest for nothing and nor were they named "mountain" gorillas by chance. And when Dian Fossey shot them to world fame with her book (and later film) *Gorilla in the Mist* she was romanticising what most of us call rain, and quite a lot of it. Last year's dry season in Bwindi lasted only for most of July.

I felt like pointing out what I'd been through to see them. The day-long drive from Kampala, thronged by colourburst birds, lush green fields, rolling hills and small plantations. The roadside dramas of tribespeople, the sight of bananas wobbling atop black bicycles and weaving through herds of heavy-horned Ankole cattle. Actually, no sympathy was due.

It was amazing to be seeing the gorillas at all. Only 650 are thought to exist — in Bwindi and neighbouring Congo.

In Bwindi one of the two groups of gorillas habituated for tourism comprises just three animals so I was pleased, at dawn, to be told that we were to track the larger Mubare territory group. Only 12 of the US \$180 tracking permits are issued each day and they are booked well in advance, so our group of six had struck lucky.

Well, probably. As we picked up staves to help keep our footing on the slopes the chief tracker pointed out a clausie in the small print. "The trackers are guaranteed to see the gorillas. We'll try to point them out but we can't guarantee you'll see them."

It was 7am and our group consisted of four Americans and a German girl with great enthusiasm for gorillas and for the trackers. The chief tracker asked after our health. "If you have any sickness, tell us now. Later on, if we hear any sneeze or cough," he scanned our group with a suspicious eye, "you will be dismissed." Then he set off up the mountain. I followed, breathing gently, hoping the near-vertical gradient would not dislodge any debris left by 20 years of smoking. One thing the slope did dislodge was the American couple in their 60s. Despite encourage-



A gorilla's natural instinct can be to fight shy of mankind, despite its in-bred curiosity. In Bwindi and across the border in Congo only 650 are thought to still exist

ment they pleaded exhaustion and were escorted back by the lead tracker, which left us with his two assistants. We'd already had the worst of the climb. Soon we forced a path through 7ft-high elephant grass, stepping on a layer of undergrowth that raised us three feet above the ground.

Finally we surfed down a steep valley on rotten muddy leaves to find the nests where the gorillas had spent their night. Nine nest circles had been worn into the floor of a flattened area of grass, each bearing the clear imprint where a mighty body had curled to sleep. Flies circled round a mighty turd, so fresh and so big I began to question the wisdom of carrying on.

One of the trackers gave us a last-minute warning. "Gorillas aren't aggressive but they often charge. Don't run away. Just... extend backwards."

But we still had some extending forwards to do, and the going got difficult. By now it was about 10am, and the animals would have been on the move, grazing, since dawn. Following a group of gorillas powerful enough to brush aside trees and eat their way through smaller obstacles is no easy matter for unfit urban bipeds laden with cameras and sandwiches. With the trackers hacking through the dense vegetation ahead with machetes, we stumbled a barely noisily path in pursuit. Barely

an hour-and-a-half later, Tintin memories flooded through my mind at the first glimpse of a black-domed head. The previous day, I'd been told, a gorilla had examined an Italian's Rolex, but our first gorilla looked round and showed no interest in me or my Seiko; he headed through the bush before our group fumbled out its cameras and patched leaves across automatic flash units to stop them disturbing the gorillas.

Then the air was filled with the crashing sounds of activity and the smell of damp carpet. Bunched on slippery, muddy slopes we saw more gorillas, passing by quickly or stopping to sit and scratch.

And then the lead male, the Silverback, whose name, Ruhondeza, means the one who likes sleeping. The vast power was an impressive sight as he hunched protectively near a nursing mother who was licking a streak of baby plastered along her forearm.

A young ape crashed through the undergrowth nearby and disappeared into the dense bush. But our two junior trackers weren't talkative and I began to yearn for the clear detail of TV wildlife footage, and the helpful narration of an expert voiceover to tell me what was going on.

Contact time with the gorillas is limited to an hour, so by early afternoon I was back at the camp waiting for hot water for the bucket shower. From the gorillas I moved on to explore the wildlife of the Queen Elizabeth National Park, an area the size of Wales that is home to all of Africa's game species in a varied landscape of lakes, volcanic craters, savannah, papyrus swamps and dense forest. The experience was the better because I wasn't sharing it with any other Westerners.

Uganda has a reputation for being unsafe, which is far from the truth. There are problems in some places — a large area to the north of the Nile is largely out of government control, and the Ruwenzori National Park is currently off-limits — but there's plenty to see in perfect safety.

An invasion by Tanzania and a couple of civil wars in its recent past has protected the country from the sanitising effect of mass tourism, and accommodation and communications retain an idiosyncratic appeal. City centres are calm.

Perhaps most charming was Ndali Lodge, near Fort Portal and the chimpanzees of Kibale National Park, newly built on family land recently returned after being confiscated by Idi Amin in 1972.

Set on a bird-covered ridge overlooking swamps, volcanic lakes and rolling plantations, candle-powered chandeliers, dark-glazed floors, spreading thatch and wooden beams give a baronial atmosphere of haphazard luxury.

Banquets are served on solid furniture in medieval style. For the first year or so the cuisine was, apparently, fairly medieval: early guests showed their appreciation not by leaving tips, but by sending cookbooks. Yet standards have gone up: lavish pies, salads and home-cooked bread rolls were a refreshing change from attempts at international cuisine.

There are never more than 16 guests and usually far fewer. The owner, Mark Price, generally shares the evening meal which is a sign of confidence in itself.

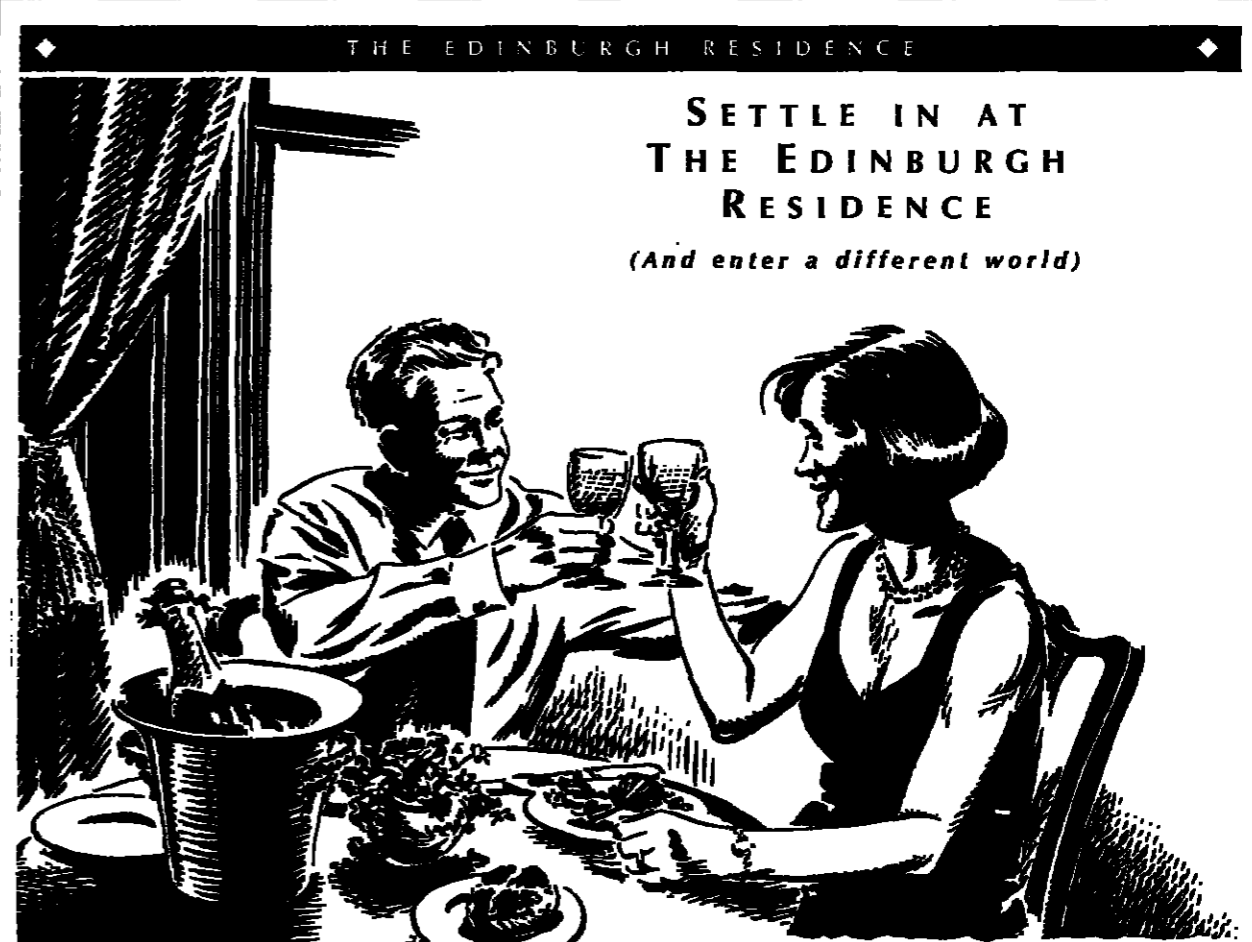
Although there's a full range of imported drinks, favourite at Ndali is waragi, a banana spirit distilled in 40-gallon drums in the plantations and available in plain bottles or triple-distilled by the government to remove some of the toxins and sold with a label.

To sip at a glass of waragi by the light of 40 candles and chat about Uganda's turbulent past and colourful present sums up, for me, the country's very special appeal.



FACT FILE

- Jack Barker travelled with Abercrombie & Kent (0171-559 8666), which specialises in tailor-made travel in the area. A five-night stay including gorilla trekking costs from £2,515 per person, including flights, trekking permit, guide, vehicle, accommodation and most meals. (Gorilla trekking permits cost £110, rising to £125 from June, and are booked up months ahead.)
- Jack Barker flew to Uganda with Alliance Air (0181-944 5012), which flies to Entebbe, Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro International airports three times a week from Heathrow. Fares to all destinations start at £507.
- Although most of Uganda is safe, political instability can affect some areas, and travelling between cities at night is never recommended. Fortunately communications are so bad that any rebels tend to stay put, and Kampala's switched-on British Consulate (00256 41 257054) is very aware of the danger zones: check with the Foreign Office on 0171-238 4503/4504 or on Telexnet for the latest bulletins.
- British passport holders do not need a visa for Uganda.
- Guidebook choice: Guide to Uganda (Bradt Publications, £11.95); Guide to East Africa (Lonely Planet, £13.99).
- Best time to go: in June to August, the roads are most likely to be dry, giving you the best chance of reaching the animals, but you should be able to see them at other times of year.
- Further information: The Uganda High Commission (0171-839 5783).



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Jack Barker's party pause for breath during their trek to view the mountain gorillas

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: TREKKING IN THE INTERIOR

DIANE COOKLEN JENKINS



Pack drill: mules carry provisions and the occasional tired hiker along a well-used trail through tropical forests that leads to the lower slopes of Pico Duarte, at 10,425ft the highest peak in the Caribbean



Who goes there?
 Germans on cheap packages in the winter. Brits on cheap packages in the summer. Energetic travellers. Miami bankers to gamble in the casinos. South American, Cuban and Haitian exiles with bundles of cash.
Getting the ball rolling:
 Dominican Republic Embassy (0171-727 6232); Tourist Board, 20 Crawford Street, London W1H 2BB, e-mail: domrep-touristboard@tourist.com
Perfect Timing:
 Almost any time. Temperatures for most of the year hover between 25C (77F) and 28C (82F). October is high-risk month for hurricanes: expect heavy rainfall and high winds.
Suitcase strategy:
 Pack: light natural fabrics. Diets: light for traveller's revenge. Cover up when visiting churches - no shorts. Beach clothes are cheap: sun tan lotion dubious and film often past its sell-by date. Bring back: Calvin Klein jeans (they make them here), cigars, Barcelo rum, amber, wood carvings and naive street art.
The pesos in your pocket:
 Take US dollars or dollar travellers' cheques. The local currency is the peso; there are roughly 23 to the pound. Expect to pay £1 for a beer in a local bar, £1.50 in a hotel. A bottle of Chilean red costs £12-£15, a meal out with wine costs £15-£25 a head.
Turn of phrase:
 "Can I help you? I speak five languages," often means "Can I act as your unofficial guide for a monster tip?" a man who asks "Do you want to meet my cousin/sister/friend?" has more in mind than an exchange of pleasantries.
Big no-nos:
 Nudity. Saying anything remotely flattering about Haitians. Refusing to dance the merengue. Drinking the tap water.
Nasty surprises:
 Sex tourism, although the prostitutes no longer patrol the beaches. Monto, a local stew made with tripe. Kamikaze beer whose "hiss" warbles through the sound system in every bar, restaurant and hotel lift.
Not to be missed:
 Playa Grande beach east of Puerto Plata. Spanish colonial architecture, tapas bars and shopping at the Mercado Modelo in the capital Santo Domingo. Humpback whale-watching (Jan to April) off the Samaná peninsula. Windsurfing at Cabarete.
Ways to go:
 Thomson (090 502399) does a charter service twice a week from Gatwick and Manchester to Puerto Plata, £269 return, or three times a fortnight from Manchester and once from Gatwick to Santo Domingo, £279. British Airways (0345 222111) flies on Sundays from Gatwick to San Juan, Puerto Rico, plus onward connections. £575. Book through Caribbean Connection Flights (01244 355303).
Any good packages?
 Thomson offers two weeks all-inclusive in March at the Riu Merengue, Colofesi, near Puerto Plata, for £579. Unifit (0990 336336) offers two weeks all-inclusive at Puerto Plata Village, Playa Dorada, departing Gatwick May 10, for £649 per adult based on four sharing.

From the river, I heard what sounded like gun shots. Clambering up the bank, I found the noise was made by a young lad practising his skills with a long whip. A few feet away, totally unperturbed, four mules waited patiently to be loaded up with provisions for the hike through the jungle. It was early morning, a time of cool clarity just before the sun began to heat the lush terrain of the Dominican Republic. This was day two of a trek to the summit of Pico Duarte, the highest peak in the Caribbean at 3,175 metres (10,425ft). Our group was made up of three Americans, the Dominican guide, Alex, three muleteers from a nearby village and me (from London). Our arrival at the starting point, La Ciénaga, had caused

Elaine Snell survived the ups and downs of local life on an eco-friendly trek up a mountain

some consternation because a forest fire was blocking part of the route. Without technology in the area to help us to find out more details, we would have to rely on the equivalent of the bush telegraph. We decided to stick to the plan and see whether the fire had subsided by the time we attempted the climb to the summit. The first day was a short

walk of 2½ miles to Los Tablones on a well-used trail through dense tropical broadleaf forest, interrupted by areas of wild cane with elegant stems that created an archway of greenery high above us.

At Los Tablones, the wooden cabin in which we stayed was bare apart from a ludicrously high table and benches. Bedding was to be a sleeping bag on the concrete floor behind a windowless partition. Next to the cabin was the kitchen, with a random selection of iron pots on a stone slab that served as an oven once the fire was lit. Quite how Alex managed to cook a good meal of pork and rice in the dark is beyond me - he made it seem as easy as popping a packet of something into the microwave.

A dog hovered nearby and a hen and her chicks scuttled around in the hope of a few crumbs. Around a camp fire, we toasted marshmallows. Studded with millions of stars, the clear, black night sky was the sort that you simply do not see in towns or cities. This is a remote and peaceful part of the world but the range of noises "off-stage" of a squillion unseen creatures was extraordinary. It rained hard during the night, which explained why it was more sensible to sleep on unyielding concrete than outside. I was surprised in the morning to see that all seven of the tiny chicks had survived the stormy night, as they emerged from under the hen's protective wings. The following day, the word was that the forest fire prevailed, so we would have to revise our route. We could climb 2,200m to El Cruce then descend into Valle Tertero. The rough ground helped us to grip the steep incline. The vegetation changed to mixed broadleaf and pine forest, almonds, sierra palms and thick ferns. Above us, air plants sprouted from the trees. Occasionally, there was a break in the forest where we could survey the vast landscape. It was also gratifying to see how far we had come in a fairly short time. It was hot and very beautiful.

The mules, three of them laden with all our baggage and the fourth carrying one of our party, passed one of us on foot and pointed along the way where we would rendezvous for a break and a snack. The bleached skeleton of a dead tree marked El Cruce. The last third of a mile was the most arduous. The pitted single track snaked up and the midday sun beat down. On a steep bend were scattered the bones of a mule that had died only a week ago, eaten by dogs who dashed up from the villages for the feast. Alex told me that if a mule is

sick far from home, it is unloaded and left to make its own way back. If it makes it, it is treated. At El Cruce, we re-established that we could go no further up. From there we headed down (bliss!) along a wider path towards Valle Tertero. There were spectacular views of the neighbouring mountains and we descended into large open meadows. The surrounding trees were draped with long grey skeins of old man's beard which gave a spooky impression of rooms unoccupied for many years, thick with dust and cobwebs. We were told we would be sharing the cabin with 20 forest firefighters, men who had gone up from the villages to do what they could with no equipment. At dusk, great whoops and hollering were exchanged between the men coming down the mountain and our muleteers. A large camp fire had been lit under a sheet of corrugated iron propped up by four branches which served as a shelter from the torrential rain. The men arrived drenched. Far from coming back from a hard day's work to a shower, dry clothes, a few beers and a hearty meal, they attempted to dry off in front of the fire, peeling off one layer at a time. They ate a scrappy meal of rice from an assortment of cut-down plastic containers and old tins. They talked animatedly, presumably about the day's events, while the Americans and I sat to one side and simply watched - for hours. We were totally absorbed in the scene. When the men departed before dawn, smoke rose from the mountain in the distance, indicating there was still work to be done. We had to retrace our steps

and make our way back to El Cruce. There I decided to ride a mule. Having not ridden for 30 years, perhaps it was not the best idea to have a go at that particular point. In any case, as I recall, riding a horse is not a lot like riding a mule. The saddle was a hotchpotch of padding, rope and leather. I couldn't reach the stirrups and the reins were to be held loose. A muleteer gave me instructions in Spanish on how to ride the mule, but I don't speak Spanish - and, anyway, what was I supposed to tell it to do? There was only one path and we were homeward bound. Wasn't that enough? From my perch on top of the mule, the downward slope looked almost vertical, perilous with rocks, crevices and potholes. Falling off was not an option. At best I would have fallen into the thick mud on parts of the trail saturated by last night's rain storm: at worst I would have fallen on to rocks or just be tipped off the outer edge of the path... so I hung on. My lack of riding ability at least provided some entertainment for the two young muleteers. Although I did not understand their banter, I was clearly the butt of their jokes. And there were times when they egged my mule on, urging it to go faster, knowing I did not know how to take control myself. The company that organised our trek, Iguana Mama, was started by Tricia Surriel, an ebullient American woman now resident in the Dominican Republic. She is passionate about the country and its people and is committed to the need for education - 20 per cent of Iguana Mama's income goes towards local schools and parks. It is estimated that only one in ten children receives a proper secondary education. Ms Surriel is also conscious of the need to preserve the environment. By arranging tours for people who want to gain a little more insight into the colour and culture of this remarkable country, her team is setting up eco-guidelines and donating clothes and shoes to local people.

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HOW TO CLIMB YOUR MOUNTAIN

Accommodation: Hotel Kaoba in Cabarete (001 809 571 0837) has double rooms for \$33 (£20), apartments for \$38 (£24) and studios at \$44 (£27.50).
Mountaineers: To climb Pico Duarte, visitors must obtain a permit from the Dirección Nacional de Parques at La Ciénaga for \$3.95. It is advisable to take a guide. The driest time is December to February.
Escorted walks: Contact Iguana Mama in Cabarete (001 809 571 0908, fax: 001 809 571 0734, email: iguanamama@cedatel.net.do). The company charges \$350 (£185) for a three-day hike and \$425 (£260) for four days. Another operator is DNP in Maricao (001 809 585 7887).
Red tape: All visitors need a tourist card. £8 from the Dominican Republic Embassy, Consular Section, 139 Inverness Terrace. London W2 6JF (0171-727 6232, fax 0171-727 3693), 10am-2pm weekdays. It can be bought on arrival, but expect lengthy queues. Polio, tetanus, typhoid and hepatitis A jabs are recommended, as are malaria tablets, although the main resorts are low-risk.
Reading: *Caribbean Islands Handbook* (Footprint, £14.99) *The Caribbean & the Bahamas* (Cadogan, £14.99).

HIDDEN ITALY

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS

Spying on the cook in a Caribbean kitchen

Have hotels on the island improved food and hygiene standards? **Jill Hartley** investigates

Last month I visited the Dominican Republic to stay in a typical all-inclusive resort. I travelled with Unijet, which is featuring the country for the first time this summer. Is this brave or foolish, given the complaints that have been generated by visitors to the island (as our panel opposite relates)? The marketing manager, Owen Whitehead, admitted that the timing was bad but said he had confidence in all the resorts featured.

I stayed at Puerto Plata Village, a 390-room low-rise complex in Playa Dorada, the largest resort on the north coast, with more than 100 hotels. Puerto Plata had been awarded a three-palm-tree rating in the Unijet brochure (there is no star rating in the country).

My room was huge and spotless, and everything in the bathroom worked — the pristine white towels were changed twice a day — and there was a large terrace overlooking a manicured tropical garden.

Mindful of the health risks, I decided to adopt my "India rules": bottled water, and cooked food only; no unpieled fruit, salads or ice cream, no ice in drinks. I abandoned one of my rules on the first morning at the breakfast buffet when I saw a pile of fruit delivered in a supermarket trolley to a woman wearing disposable plastic gloves who chopped it straight on to waiting plates.

From then on I ate both salads and other cold food, including desserts, from the daily buffets, but I stuck rigorously to bottled water, even for cleaning my teeth. Foolhardy? Maybe, but I escaped without even a twinge of traveller's tummy.

And despite hours of eavesdropping round the pool, I failed to hear one complaint. In the interests of research I followed the maids around, lurked around the service exits and got deliberately lost a few times in the kitchens. Nobody seemed to mind and there was nothing nasty to report. One night, as if to say "We've got nothing to hide," the dinner buffet was served in the kitchen among gleaming stainless-steel surfaces, giant tins, olive jars and hams hanging artfully from the ceiling.

My fellow guests were mainly Canadians, Germans, Belgians and French.

Phil and Sue Reardon, from Torrington, North Devon, and their daughter, Becky, 6, travelling with First Choice, were among the few British. Had they heard about health scares?

"I lived in Hong Kong for five years," said Mr Reardon. "There was always some kind of food scare there, so I tend not to take much notice. What we are getting here represents fantastic value for money."

The message was the same from Lesley Kingsnorth and John Worthington, from Crystal Palace, South London, who



Has the beautiful Dominican Republic been stuck with a "cheap 'n' nasty" label that it does not deserve?



Simon and Suzanna Dawber: a hassle-free wedding

enthused about their last-minute discounted holiday with First Choice — £530 for two weeks. "This is worth it for the drinks alone. It is easy to spend this kind of money going out at home. Tourism is so important to this country that it has had to become more cautious and diligent about hygiene. Now is perhaps the safest time to visit," said Mr Worthington.

Walking around Rio Merengue, a neighbouring resort rated one palm tree higher than mine, I came across Simon and Suzanna Dawber,

from Wigan, and their young son, Calum. Newly-wed by a few minutes, they looked astonished when I asked if they had heard about health and hygiene problems.

Their spur-of-the-moment wedding organised by Thomson had been easier and more romantic than marrying at home, they said. Food, drink, standards and service in the hotel were all "excellent".

I caught Philip Ashton and Linda Green, from Blackburn, in the bar having a final drink

after a two-week holiday with Airtours. Health problems? "You get health scares wherever you go in the world and you always meet people who want to complain about something," said Linda. "We have had fantastic food with lots of choices and different entertainment each night. We will definitely come again."

Admittedly, I visited only two all-inclusive resorts and there are around 400 hotels in the Dominican Republic, but I came away with no stories about filthy kitchens. The food was better than I'd expected. Every day there was a choice for vegetarians, a roast, a pasta dish and salads. The local Presidente beer and local rum-based cocktails were excellent. My one criticism was the undrinkable wine with dinner. But what did I expect for less than £1,000 all-in for two weeks?

Outside the resort I'd met friendly people — no aggressive hustlers, beach vendors or rip-off taxi drivers as in some Caribbean islands. Beyond the beach, I'd walked in stunning mountain scenery, I'd swam in a waterfall, gone whale-watching, visited a cigar factory and been impressed by the elegant restaurants and Spanish colonial architecture of the capital, Santo Domingo.

As I waited for the plane home I felt sympathy for all those who had seen their dream holiday ruined by illness. But I also felt sad for the Dominican Republic, a beautiful country stuck with a "cheap 'n' nasty" label that it does not deserve.

FACT FILE

Jill Hartley travelled with Unijet (0990 336336), which will start operating to the Dominican Republic from Gatwick and Manchester on May 1. She stayed in a standard room at the all-inclusive Puerto Plata Village in Playa Dorada.

Prices for two weeks in May start at £699 per person, based on two people sharing. Between July 16 and August 19 the cost rises to £899. The price includes all meals and snacks, local-brand drinks, some watersports, tennis and bicycles.

For further information on travelling to the Dominican Republic, see the fact file opposite.

Tour operators are being sued by holidaymakers

Today, in a hotel room in Birmingham, 150 angry holidaymakers will meet a team of lawyers to plan their next move in a battle for compensation against some of the UK's largest tour operators, *Jill Hartley* writes.

More than 500 people have ongoing claims against major holiday companies, following ill-fated trips to the Dominican Republic, where the majority suffered illnesses, including typhoid and cholera.

Clive Garner, a partner in Irwin Mitchell, solicitors specialising in holiday illness and accident claims, is one of the lawyers acting on their behalf in a series of group actions against operators.

"A significant number of my clients contracted illnesses such as salmonella, dysentery, cholera and typhoid following holidays to the Dominican Republic," he says.

"A lot of them had young children who have been affected. Many were on honeymoon and many continued to suffer symptoms several months after they returned."

"As well as claiming damages for illness, my clients are also claiming compensation for loss of enjoyment of their holiday, out-of-pocket expenses and diminution in the value of the holiday itself."

"We know that responsible holiday companies are making efforts to improve health and hygiene standards, but some still have a lot of work to do. Meanwhile, some holidaymakers continue to be at risk of developing what may be potentially life-threatening conditions."

Irwin Mitchell works closely with Holiday Travelwatch, set up by Brenda Wall, who last year co-ordinated a group action with 113 fellow holidaymakers against the tour operator First Choice, after she and her husband, Gary, suffered dysentery and salmonella on a holiday to the Caribbean island of San Andres.

Mrs Wall claims to have received thousands of letters since last summer from people who returned from the Dominican Republic with "serious illnesses". She says many have written proof from a GP or public health department.

There are those in the travel industry who dispute Mrs Wall's figures, but they do not deny that the Dominican Republic has had damaging health problems. Last summer, Thomson, which handles 40 per cent of package holi-

500 launch action on complaints

days to the country, evacuated 350 people from the Costa Caribe Hotel in Juan Dolio, where at least three holidaymakers contracted typhoid.

It has not yet been proved that the hotel kitchens were to blame, but the damage has been done. Two tour operators — Inspirations and Flying Colours — pulled out, blaming adverse publicity over health for a drop in sales. Thomson's sales for this summer, the peak time for UK visitors, have suffered and weekly flights have been reduced from 12 to nine.

The FTO has forced all its members who sell holidays to the Dominican Republic to adopt the Cristal programme, a scheme to control hygiene in hotel kitchens.

All staff who handle food must complete a training course and pass an exam. Random checks and microbiological tests on food samples are carried out before a hotel is given a clean bill of health and a Cristal award.

The six biggest operators to the Dominican Republic — Thomson, Airtours, First Choice, Sunworld, Cosmos and Unijet — say they will drop any hotel which fails the hygiene test.

Holiday Travelwatch, PO Box 6410, Birmingham B30 0HF. Irwin Mitchell: 0121-212 1828.



The Puerto Plata buffet: how it should be done

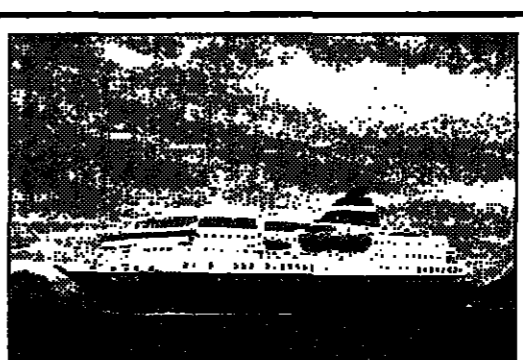
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ITALY



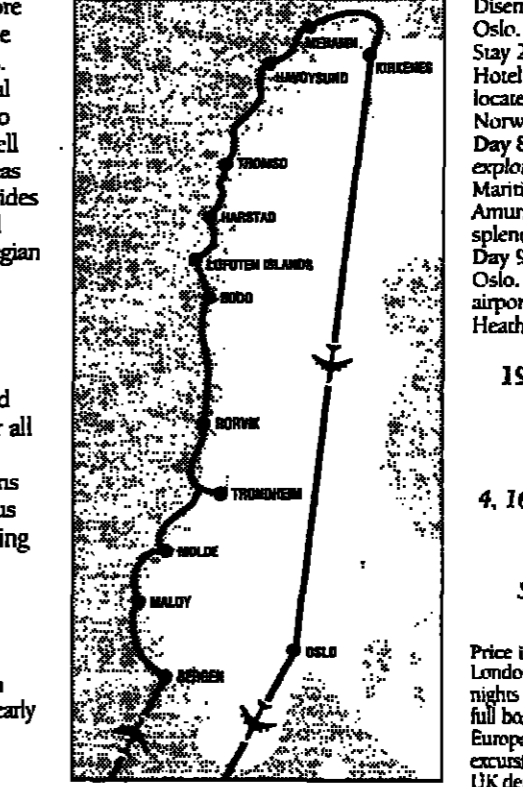
Worthington and Lesley Kingsnorth: "Now is probably the safest time to visit"

A Norwegian Coastal Voyage offers the traveller scenery on an epic scale together with a wonderful feeling of peace and tranquillity. It is difficult to imagine a more relaxing setting than coastal Norway. The immense size of the fjords and the timeless quality of scenes that have changed little in the past centuries create a unique atmosphere that can be particularly enjoyed from the comfort of a coastal vessel.



NORWEGIAN Coastal Voyage

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The new generation ships of the Norwegian Coastal Fleet which ply the coast daily from Bergen to the far north of Norway provide a vital link to the isolated coastal communities. Obviously, this is not a cruise in the accepted sense of the word, but all the more enjoyable for many because of the absence of the usual jollifications. These working vessels have a dual role of providing transportation to local passengers and freight as well as offering cruise places to overseas visitors. This unique service provides the ideal means of seeing Coastal Norway and experiencing Norwegian life in a way that would not be possible on a regular cruise ship.

The Coastal Fleet has a fine tradition of providing excellent wholesome food and a caring and efficient service. The vessels offer all you would expect of a modern, purpose-built ship; the 230 cabins have private facilities and spacious public areas which include a dining room, cafe, lounges, bar, library and shop.

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London Heathrow to Bergen with Scandinavian Airlines, arriving early afternoon. Embark Coastal vessel. Afternoon free to explore Norway's second largest city, strikingly located between the mountains and the sea. Sail in the early evening.



Fjord post the rich fishing banks for an afternoon at sea. Day 4 Bodo to Lofoten Islands. Cross the Arctic Circle and navigate the many channels, passing some of the enchanting villages. In Bodo there will be the opportunity to take a trip to the top of Mount Romvik with its magnificent views. In the afternoon sail to the Lofoten Islands, where fairy tale villages by the edge of the sea are backed by towering, jagged granite peaks. Day 5 Harstad to Tromso. After a brief call at Harstad we will sail into Tromso, the largest town north of the Arctic Circle. This is a driving city with two excellent museums and some amazing architecture. Be sure to visit the stunning modern cathedral. Day 6 Havoynd to Mehamn. The highlight of today will be the opportunity to visit the North Cape plateau which rises almost 1000 feet out of the sea. Day 7 Kirkenes to Oslo.

Disembark after breakfast and fly to Oslo. Brief orientation tour of the city. Stay 2 nights at the first class Europa Hotel (or similar) which is centrally located and ideally placed for exploring Norway's capital. Day 8 Oslo. This is an ideal city to explore on foot. Be sure to visit the Maritime Museum which includes Amundsen's Polar ship - Gjøa, and splendid examples of Viking ships. Day 9 Oslo to London. Morning free in Oslo. Early afternoon departure for airport for Scandinavian Airlines flight to Heathrow, arriving late afternoon.

1998 DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

29 April	from £1330
21 May	from £1430
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Sole occupancy supplement from £365

Price includes: Economy class air travel London/Bergen and Kirkenes/Oslo/London, 6 nights aboard a Norwegian Coastal vessel on full board, transfers, 2 nights in Oslo at the Europa Hotel on breakfast only basis, excursion in Oslo, port taxes, airport taxes, UK departure tax, tour manager. Not included: Travel insurance, shore excursions, tips to crew.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS Please telephone 0171-409 0376 (7 days a week during office hours)

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CRICKET IN THE SUN: THE CARIBBEAN

All out in the midday sun

Cricket fans have flocked to the Caribbean to follow England's progress against the West Indies. But, as Michael Evans reports, they missed an appearance by the little-known Fleet Street Exiles...

If you're planning to play cricket five days in a row in five different countries, you may as well do it on a cruise ship in the Caribbean in 90 degrees. It sounds distinctly British, a cricketing holiday — and you can only imagine someone British packing box and pads alongside swimming trunks, spikes and whites alongside loafers and Bermudas. But for the average British cricketer, the Caribbean is trouble. There's no such thing as an average Caribbean cricketer — they're all good. Even the so-called "veteran cricketers" are not old, they're just more experienced. The English, however, should not be daunted. The benefits of a cricketing holiday in the Caribbean outweigh the hard toil in the hot sun; and the prospects for sporting holidays in this part of the world have never been better. Caribbean cricketing teams are eager to play visiting sides, and travel companies, such as Thomson, are beginning to realise the advantages of



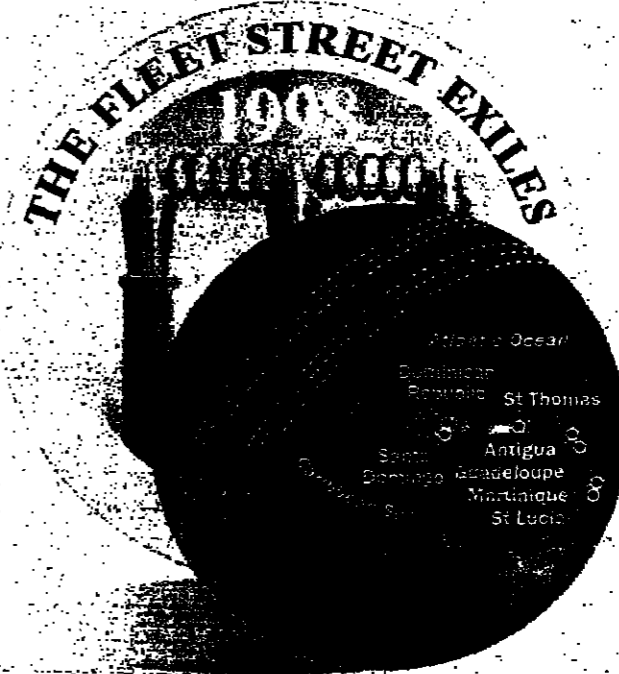
The Fleet Street Exiles take on the local team — which included the Prime Minister — in Grenada, where they were greeted as if they were the visiting England C team

cruise holidays that include a bit of island-hopping cricket. There are restrictions on playing time though, because a cruise ship has a strict timetable and when the captain is told to leave by 5pm, that's what he has to do unless

he is prepared to give up his departure slot — so you can expect limited overs, 30 each at the most. This was a one-week cruise, embarking at Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic and steaming off overnight for

the first port of call at Dominica, known as the Nature Isle and the largest of the Windward Islands. Situated between the French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, Dominica is dominated by intensely green mountains.

It has two cricket pitches, Windsor Park and the Botanical Gardens. We, the Fleet Street Exiles, played in the Botanical Gardens, overlooking the sea. The wicket was brown and flat and covered with a thin layer of dead grass. A former West Indian test batsman, Irving Shillingford, was playing for the opposing team. It was a daunting prospect but, luckily for us, he was caught the second ball he faced, moving forward to a slower ball. It was the talk of the cruise ship that evening.



The ship that took us to each island, the SS Emerald, a Thomson liner with 1,200 passengers, caters for every type of holidaymaker, from the young with babies to the old who parade around the lidos with stretched mahogany bodies, and who are invariably the first on the sunbeds in the morning.

It took a little time for the team to merge with the other cruisers but, by the end of the week, the Fleet Street Exiles were becoming famous for their prowess (or lack of it) on the pitches, and at the bars and disco in the evenings. Those who abandoned their excursion itineraries to come and watch the games soon became known as the Barry Army after the loyal supporters who follow the England cricket team wherever they tour — currently, of course, in the same part of the world.

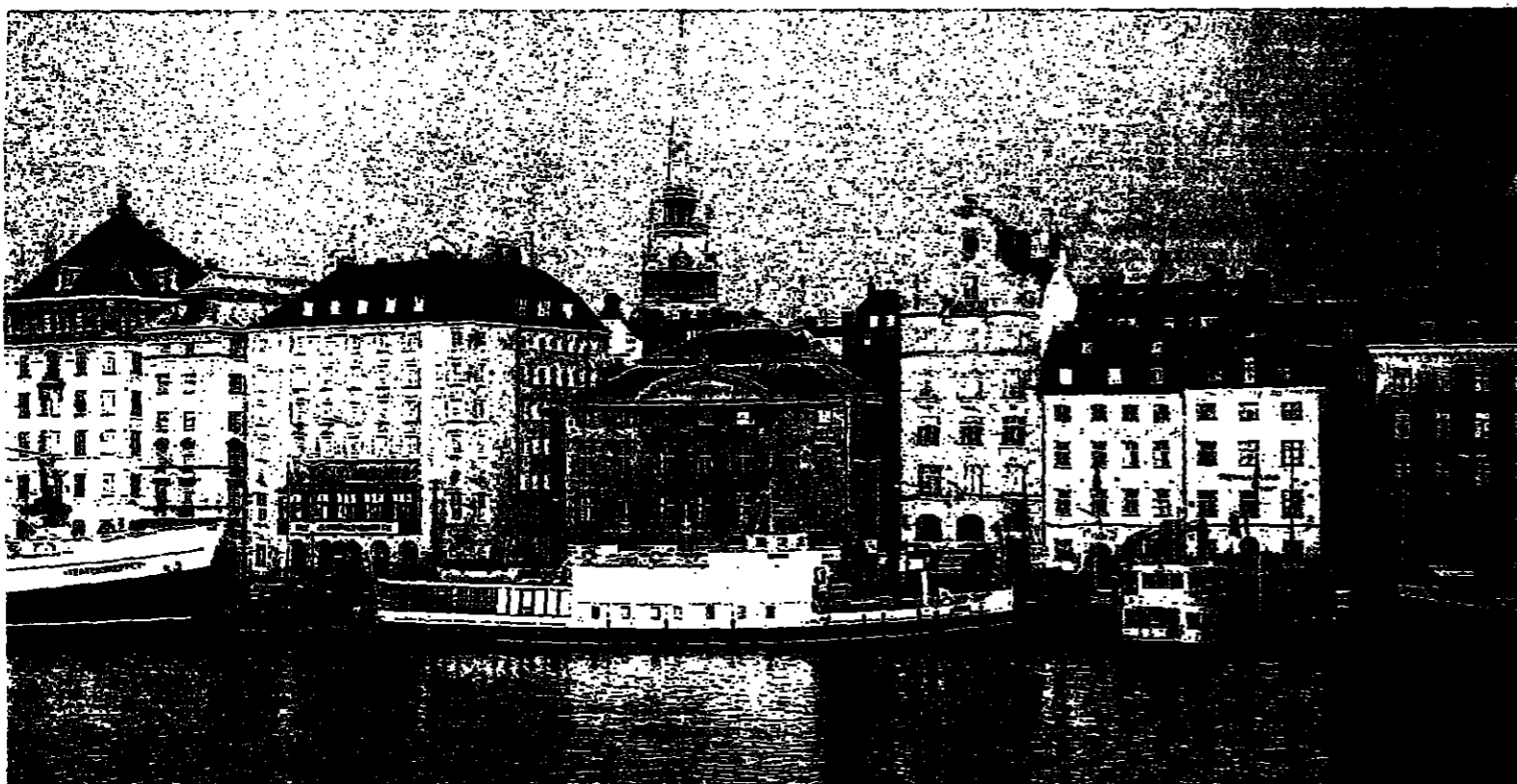
Grenada was one of the most welcoming ports of call because the Prime Minister, the Honourable Keith Mitche-

ll, was a key member of the opposing side. He played as if we were the England C team. He turned out to be a cunning spin bowler who took four wickets and was named man of the match. But we had an excuse for defeat at his hands in the shape of a walking tour of the historic St George's port in the hot sun before the match, which was enjoyable but draining. Every day another game, another island. We visited St. Lucia the favourite, mainly because the cricket match (another defeat) was followed by a swim in Marigot Bay, where Doctor Dolittle was filmed, and a lunch of barbecued chicken with a mixed

said of unbelievable ingenuity, and ruin punch. Food on the cruise ship is hugely plentiful, but there is nothing to compare with sitting down in a restaurant beside a sandy, palm tree-fringed beach eating delicious local food.

After visiting Antigua, the cruise ended at St. Thomas, the largest of the American Virgin Islands, where barrel-chested immigration officers took their time to check the credentials of every passenger prepared to wait in a long queue before disembarking for a few hours. But it was worth it for the cricket and for passengers anxious to stock up with duty free before the return trip to Santo Domingo.

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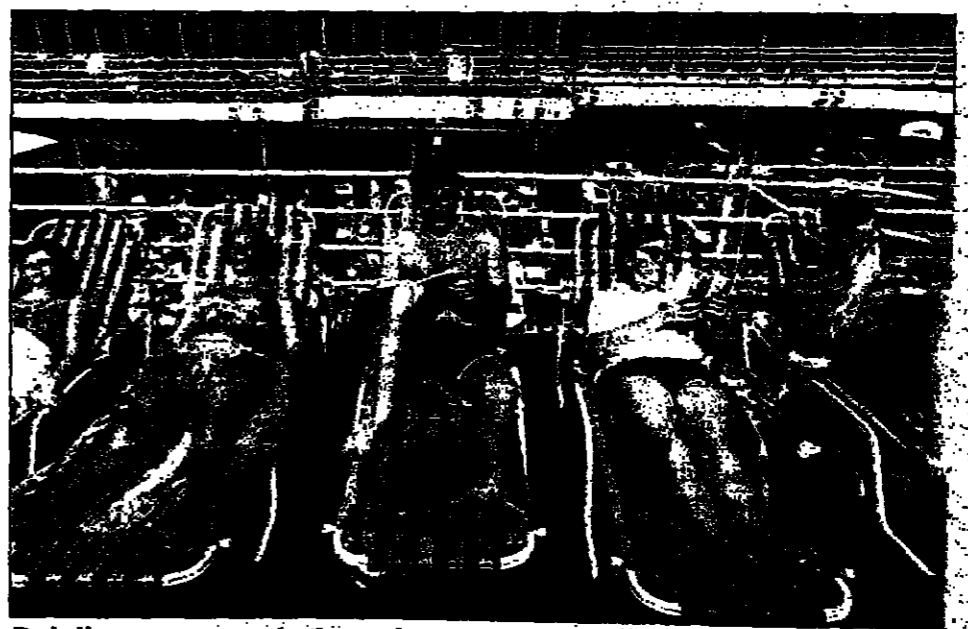


Photos: H. Bévogues-Larsson, J. Habala, R. Ryan, P. B. L. Nyberg, Denise Göttsche. info@stoinfo.se



Sweden

The following tour operators have package tours to Stockholm: Travelscene, Cresta. For more information about Stockholm: <http://www.stoinfo.se>



Body line: passengers take the sun in more relaxed style on the island-hopping cruise

TICKET TO THE WICKET

Michael Evans travelled with Thomson Cruises (0990 502562) which offers two seven-night Caribbean itineraries on board SS Emerald from £780 per person, based on two sharing a standard inside cabin. The price includes flights to the Dominican Republic on Britannia Airways, as many as six meals a day, entertainment, port taxes and all on-board tips. A seven-night cruise can be combined with an all-inclusive week in a hotel in the Dominican Republic (see our reports on pages 26 and 27) from £968.

The cricket matches were organised by the tourist boards and ministries of the individual islands visited. The Caribbean Tourism Organisation (0171-222 4335) can provide the names of tourist boards and tour operators with a special interest in cricket. The Passenger Shipping Association (0171-436 2449) issues free fact sheets about cruising.

Guidebooks: Caribbean Islands Handbook (Footprint Handbooks, £14.99); The Caribbees and the Bahamas (Cadogan, £14.99); Eastern Caribbean (Lonely Planet, £10.95).

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سكندا من الاجمل

CRICKET IN THE SUN: SRI LANKA

Bowled over as snake stops play



Times writer
Simon Wilde
saw more than cricket during the England A team's recent tour of Sri Lanka

Of all the images, this is the strongest and most fitting. A father taking his two young daughters to school, one bicycle, three lives, all precariously balanced, wending their way through the busy morning traffic of a Colombo suburb.

One girl perched implausibly but serenely on the handlebar, another on the pannier, short-socked legs contentedly crossed, without a thought for gravity. Dust swirls and seemingly settles everywhere but on their immaculate white uniforms. A symbol, perhaps, of how life in Sri Lanka proceeds against the odds.

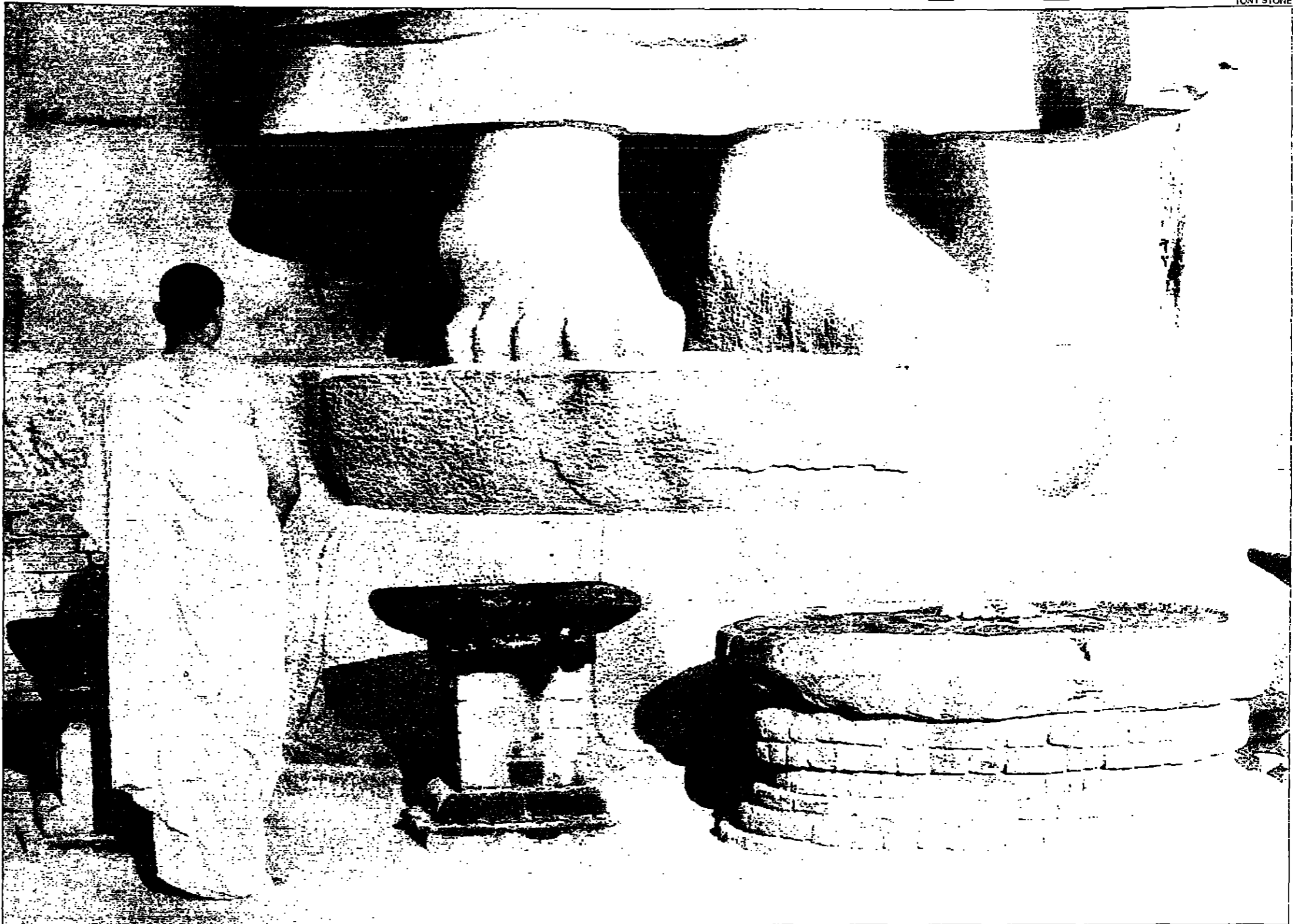
Another image. A cricket match in a cramped rural school playground among about 25 boys. There was no room to swing a skipping rope — two large trees took up most of the space — yet there the children were, enthusiastically playing the game at which this small country unexpectedly conquered the world. So much of Sri Lanka is jungle that outside the big cities any space for sport is precious. Almost every open space, from a disused garage to a building site, is commandeered for improvised games.

Always optimism. Outside the northeast of the island, life here goes on despite the much-publicised but isolated acts of terrorism. After last month's bomb blast, Kandy's magnificent Dalada Maligawa, or Temple of the Tooth, is open again to the public, who can enter from the cratered road, look up at where the tiles were shaken from the golden roof and enter the inner sanctum where the Buddha's tooth remains eerily unscathed.

There has been little or no decline in tourism. The hotels of Kandy remain full and so, too, do those along the south-west coastal strip. There, this month, you might well have seen the British male dropping in on the cricket grounds where the England A team was playing, having left his wife by the hotel poolside to assess her morning purchases.

Watching organised cricket is as likely to produce a bizarre incident as any other activity on this enchanted island. My favourite was when a snake — a brown, sft garandia — decided to take part in the match at Kurunegala. It intercepted the ball in the deep field, much to the surprise of James Ormond, the England fielder, who hastily switched positions in the mistaken belief that it was venomous.

Many of the grounds on which England played had only a single stand and rudimentary seating around the rest of the perimeter, so they were not much different from



A Buddhist monk worships at the feet of a colossal statue at Polonnaruwa. Island life on Sri Lanka goes on much the same as it has through the ages, despite the isolated acts of terrorism



Just about anywhere they can find a space, children play the national pastime: cricket

the typical English county ground, even if the variety of tropical plant life and relentless sunshine struck a contrast with an average Thursday at Northampton.

My first impression was that the games had attracted no crowds at all, until I learnt the trick of looking outside the ground and saw how many were watching from the tops of bus shelters, or standing on bicycles propped up against walls.

Cricket taking priority, the biggest problem for me was that there was so little time to do the important things on tour, namely seeing the sights and doing the beaches.

But one thing that could be squeezed between breakfast

and the first over was a spot of early-morning snorkelling at Hikkaduwa. This is the best time to marvel at the white, blue and elephant-ear coral or the brightly coloured zebra fish, and take a dip with the friendly, elephantine turtles, which happily let you feed them clumps of seaweed.

Once the cricket had finished for the day, a good supper took precedence. Hikkaduwa's New Moon-beam restaurant served excellent dishes of devilled crab and lobster, and good white wine. If you sat on the balcony there was the added attraction of watching the trucks and coaches play their terrifying games of catch-me-if-you-can along one of the fastest strips on the island.

The restaurants and bars were livelier, if more conventional, in and around Colombo, where it was possible for Mike Gatting and his charges — though they balked at playing matches in the city — to sate their appetites for

deep-pan pizza and satellite coverage of the West Indies Tests. Those of more romantic bent preferred the old colonial delights of the Galle Face and Mount Lavinia hotels, where they could drink whisky sours on the terrace and watch the sun go down over the ship-filled horizon.

Kurunegala was the best venue from which to make day-long sorties to the sites of ancient civilisation at Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya — the latter the fantastical 1,300ft-high Lion's Throat rock upon which the 5th-century King Kasyapa improbably built his palace and lived for 17 years with his 500 concubines.

The best time to go is straight after dawn, before the sun gets too hot — the climb involves nearly 2,000 steps. The routes above the massive sculpted paws — man merely elaborated on nature, which had already shaped the rock like a lion — and up to the impossibly situated frescoes

are vertiginous. The views are as surprising as they are spectacular, for it is from here that you finally appreciate to what extent Sri Lanka is still peppered with monstrous rocks and cloaked in jungle. Once the sun was too high for the Lion's Throat I made my way back to the Sigiriya Village Hotel, where the duck pond and the late-afternoon temperatures are more in keeping with an English summer — a comparison that breaks down when Kandala the elephant wanders from the foot of the garden, monkeys encroach on the tennis courts or a lizard walks on the path.

The hill country is very different from the coast, as the spectacular drive or rail journey along the climb to Kandy makes clear. More rocks climb improbably out of the earth and bats circle high above the gorges that plunge beneath whitewashed bridges. The monstrous orchids and fig trees in the Peradeniya botanic gardens and Kandy's umbrella-toting saffron-robed Buddhists bear witness to the cooler climate.

Stop off near Kegalle at the Pinawella elephant orphanage, where tiny, hairy young elephants too light to damage your toes are fed milk from bottles and cared for until they are big enough to be put to work in the forests.

South from Colombo on the long, winding and ever-more scenic route to Galle, the beaches grow in size and frequency and so do the games of cricket; these precious stretches of seaside have so far avoided the fate of those in the Caribbean, which have been bought up by the big hotel chains, to the severe detriment of the sport.

If you head inland towards Baddegama you come to a land of tea plantations and temples. Water buffaloes wade through the paddy fields, lilies smother the lakes. Families wash in the rivers — two-thirds of Sri Lankan dwellings have no water — and there is vegetation everywhere: massive bamboos, papaya and mangoes, bananas — red and green, sweet and sour, cooking — and countless greens. After the rigours of the cricket I headed further south, past the sick fishermen at Ahangama perched precariously above the waves on sticks, to the old Dutch-built fort at the port of Galle.

I walked the gigantic fort walls — they are so enormous that people actually live in them — occasionally skipping out of the way of the cattle and the inevitable cricketers who somehow manage to keep their balance among the boulder-strewn ramparts, and passing the time before sunset.

The Closenberg Hotel out of town is just the place to settle into a planter's chair beneath the blossoms on the veranda, sip a cocktail as you watch the sun go down one last time and recall the days, long gone, when our chaps could be relied on to beat their chaps at cricket.

SRI LANKA FACT FILE

- Simon Wilde travelled with Air Lanka and the Sri Lanka Tourist Board.
- Getting there: Air Lanka (0171-920 4688) has return flights from Heathrow to Colombo from £465, plus £25 taxes.
- Hayes & Jarvis (0181-222 7811) has a fortnight at a three-star hotel in Beruwala from £599; flights from Gatwick.
- Cox & Kings (0171-873 5009) has a ten-night tour staying at four-star hotels in Colombo, Dambulla, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya for £875, based on two sharing; flights from Heathrow.
- World Dreams (01463 730808) has a week's B&B at a four-star hotel on the outskirts of Colombo from £730, based on two sharing; flights from Heathrow.
- Kuoni (01306 742000) has a week's B&B at a three-star hotel on the outskirts of Beruwala from £542, based on two sharing; flights from Heathrow.
- Hotels: Taj Samudra Hotel, Colombo (00 94 1 446622) has single rooms for £80.50 and double rooms for £103.25; room-only. Sigiriya Village Hotel, Sigiriya (06 23502) has double rooms for £35. Coral Gardens Hotel, Hikkaduwa (0 77189) has single rooms for £29.50 and double rooms for £36.87. Galle Face Hotel, Colombo (1 541010) has singles and doubles for £40.50.
- Best time to visit: Between October and April, though the coastal belt attracts sun-worshippers all year round.
- Visas: British passport holders do not need visas for 30 days or fewer. Information from Sri Lanka High Commission (0171-706 4808), 13 Hyde Park Gardens, London W2 2LU.
- Further information: Sri Lanka Tourist Board (01174-920 2627), 22 Lower Regent Street, London SW1V 4QR. Sri Lanka Today magazine has features and news (for a copy, call 0181-502 9747).
- Areas to avoid: The Foreign Office (0171-238 4507/4) advises staying away from the north and east of the island, where there is conflict between security forces and Tamil Tigers.
- Guidebooks: Sri Lanka (Lamely Planet, £8.99); Sri Lanka by Rail, by Royston Ellis (Bradt, £10.95); Visitor's Guide Sri Lanka, by Katerina & Eric Roberts (MPC, £8.99).

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The Sun and the Father

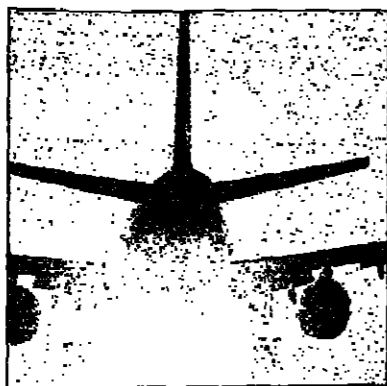
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Aspen, the premier ski resort in North America, is enjoying an increase in European visitors this year because of better snow conditions than the Alps

A playground for the serious

Fifteen minutes of fame is the most ordinary mortals can hope for. But in Aspen, even the famous are quickly forgotten. Only a month after Michael Kennedy was killed, colliding with a tree while playing "ski football", the question of why the Aspen Ski Patrol allowed the activity to take place had been long forgotten.

While I was there, I never heard a single allusion to the accident. Nor did I see Jack Nicholson, Martina Navratilova, Chris Evert or any of the hundred-odd lesser celebrities who make Aspen their home — including American country icon Jimmy Buffet, 1970s crooner David Crosby and the inventor of "Gonzo" journalism, Hunter S. Thompson.

What I did see on the slopes of Buttermilk, Aspen, Highlands and Snowmass mountains — the four distinct resorts on Aspen's lift-pass network — was a surprising number of British family skiers. More than 20 per cent of Aspen's visitors are from overseas.

Aspen officials credit British tour operators for most of the influx, for introducing chalet-style accommodation and providing free piste escorts (banned at some French resorts), but at least half the Britons I met said they had arranged their own travel and accommodation.

However, tour operators have made Aspen far more accessible this winter. Britain's biggest, Thomson, has returned Aspen to its brochure after an absence of several years. Direct charter flights from the UK to Denver are hiring price-conscious skiers and those anxious to avoid the tedious stopovers and transfers of scheduled airlines.

The British skiers I spoke to were glad to have chosen the United States over the less well-covered Alps this season, and said Aspen was much more affordable than they had expected.

I would have to say that, as well as providing America's best skiing terrain, Aspen is



DOUG SAGER

now the country's best holiday experience.

By best skiing terrain, I mean the best across the widest range of categories. Vail may have more intermediate runs. Jackson Hole may be better for experts. But Aspen caters better to every ability than anywhere else. Buttermilk mountain, for example, is probably the most immaculately groomed, most perfectly contoured terrain in the world for beginner skiers and snowboarders.

Aspen has been listening to its British visitors, too. For example, town and resort planners are weighing up the merits of train or telecabine networks which would eventually link all four Aspen resorts the way Méribel and Courchevel are linked in the Trois Vallées.

While I was in Aspen, the Aspen Skiing Company's two top executives were on a "secret mission" to the Alps. In fact, they were sniffing around the most exclusive private clubs in Europe's oldest and most expensive resorts. An American version of St Moritz's Cologn Club may be opened at the base of Aspen Mountain next winter, with memberships running as high as US\$20,000 per person.

In America, there is nothing more important than being No 1. Experts insist on noshing up another challenge. Intermediates aspire to share the same terrain as their extreme skiing video heroes.

Aspen this season became America's No 1 in two respects: the highest skiing and the longest continuous vertical

drop. A new drag lift in the Cirque area of Snowmass — previously accessible only by climbing — carries skiers to the highest lift-served skiing (12,510ft) on the North American continent. The lift, which opened for skiing this season, is expected to run for at least 60 days each winter. There are other ski areas, such as Breckenridge, where it is possible to ski at higher altitudes, but only by climbing uphill past the last ski lift.

As well as having the highest skiing, Snowmass now has the longest drop down any mountain in America, of 4,406ft. This vertical length of skiing terrain is dwarfed by Blackcomb Mountain in Canada and several European resorts with vertical terrain nearly twice as long, but in America there is nowhere you can ski down longer — without stopping to take another lift. (Don't be confused by Jackson Hole, which has the longest continuous vertical uphill rise in America with its 4,139ft cable car.)

These statistics have serious consequences in American ski wars, in which, during the past 18 months, resorts have grouped together or been gobbled up by large companies as never before. Aspen is shedding its fur-coat stereotype and throwing open some of the hardest-core skiing in America.

Opening new expert areas is the hottest trend in American skiing, an attempt to disprove the European belief that there is no off-piste skiing in America by making chutes (couloirs),

trees and cliff jumps legal within resort boundaries.

This season, Winter Park in Colorado opened a vast experts-only sector called the Vasquez Cirque, as steep a pitch as any recreational skier could hope for. Expert tree skiing, better than anything in the Alps (thanks to Colorado's far higher tree line) also opened this season at tiny Berthoud Pass, near Winter Park. And Utah's newest resort, the Canyons, this winter opened the largest single expansion of expert terrain in North America.

But Aspen more than meets these challenges with its new Y-Zones at Aspen Highlands. Previously not accessible to recreational skiers by ski lift, the Y-Zones are steep terrain on the edge of Highland Bowl and as hardcore skiing as anything in Verbier or Val d'Isère.

Aspen, unlike the Alps, does not demand that you tackle this sort of terrain on your own. Both at Aspen Highlands and on Burnt Mountain at Snowmass, the Aspen Ski School runs an off-piste programme with certified back-country guides for skiers willing to hike between ten and 30 minutes from groomed pistes.

I felt in safe hands with Bob "Slowman" Sloezen, a bearded veteran of Everest and an Aspen local with 26 years' experience in the Colorado backcountry, where idiosyncrasies of the snowpack mean there is a greater risk of avalanches than in the Alps.

Skiing legally outside resort boundaries through an open forest service "gate", and

down rolling glades thick with snow on the "Midnight Mine" itinerary, I skirted several deep depressions. These old mineshafts run for hundreds of miles under Aspen, and have claimed more lives than avalanches.

Aspen's rough old mining past comes out in refurbished luxury in such stately old classics as the Hotel Jerome and the antique-furnished timbered Sardy House Hotel, once a family home and now a discreet residence.

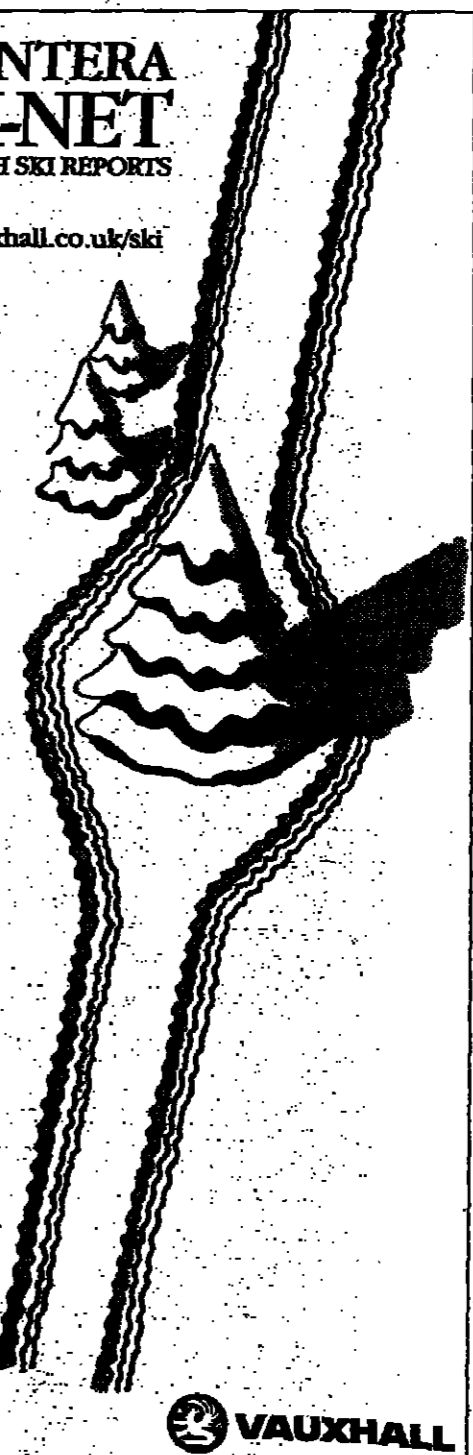
I have found good bargains in lodging over the years at Aspen Bed and Breakfast, Molly Gibson Lodge and the Hotel Aspen — all within walking distance of the ski lifts and none priced higher than similar accommodation in other American resorts.

The Aspen web site (<http://www.skiaspen.com>) features regular updates and news releases in a section on Affordable Aspen as well as a special section for under-30s on a budget, called The Virtual Hostel. Other attractions include meeting local friends at Takah Sushi or Boogies before taking a ride in John's Ultimate Taxi (<http://www.ultimatetaxi.com>), a 1979 Checker cab complete with laser shows, dry ice and live entertainment. Quieter types might prefer a midnight vegetarian snack at Explore Booksellers, the only ski-resort bookshop I know that opens that late.

Whether hardcore skiers (like the PhD who bagged my groceries at City Market) or celebrities, everyone discovers his own Aspen. When I get tired of Aspen, I'll know it's time to give up skiing.

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ASPEN FACT FILE

- Late packages for this season: Crystal (0181-599 5144) is quoting £654 based on two sharing, for seven-day holidays leaving March 7, to include direct flights to Denver, transfers and half-board accommodation.
- Going alone: There are no non-stop scheduled flights but Northwest (01293 561000) has daily flights from Gatwick via Minneapolis — prices start at £687. In March, American Airlines (0345 789789) flies from Heathrow via Chicago; prices start at £505.90, flying midweek in March.
- Accommodation: Aspen/Snowmass International reservations (001 970 923 3784 / 0762) will book hotels and self-catering, sell advance lift tickets and book ski lessons.

■ Doug Sager travelled with Thomson Ski (0990 339329) which is taking bookings for next winter. Prices at the Hotel Aspen start at £509 for seven nights B&B, including direct flights to Denver and car rental.

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سكيا من الاصل

Brian Pedley visits St David's on the eve of the saint's day, while Alan Road (right) honours another Welsh hero

Holy footsteps echoing down the 39 Articles

Police Constable Paul Phillips and his fellow officers believe themselves to be the luckiest policemen in the service. There is the joy of patrolling one of Europe's great cities — but without the drawbacks. True, the number of visiting cars and coaches rises alarmingly in the peak weeks of summer. For the most part, however, the city of St David's huddles peacefully at the most westerly point of Wales.

In this particular "intensity" the nightlife amounts to little more than a single pub, a few hotel bars and an occasional folk evening at the rugby club. Big Macs and neon are non-existent and the only crime in recent memory was when some local youngsters daubed graffiti on a bus shelter. Even then, the only real crime was that the words were in English, not Welsh.

Here, at night, you can walk around quite safely, without any fear of being attacked or mugged as happens in the large cities," says PC Phillips. "Between the three of us, we know everybody who lives here."

With its Norman cathedral and a population of only 1,400, St David's was confirmed as Britain's smallest city during a visit from the Queen in June 1995. It is also the traditional birthplace and shrine of the Welsh patron saint, which means that while Cardiff remains the bustling administrative capital of Wales, this little community, almost swallowed by the tumbling valley of the River Alun, is the spiritual and patriotic heart.

Yet for all its prestige and status, the city is little more than three main streets. At its hub is High Street, ambulating into peaceful Cross Square, with its trees and war memorial where blackbirds swoop and squawk above the banks, shops and cottages of local stone. More stores, coffee shops, gift shops and galleries have tucked themselves in the handful of side streets.

Visitors gravitate naturally to the Farmers Arms, a row of converted farm cottages. Word has obviously spread about the generous pub lunches, coal fire and barmaid called Rose. "Anyone who comes in on his own usually finds he's talking to the locals within ten minutes," says Jim Braby, a Londoner who acquired the pub ten years ago. "There's a lovely caring feel about St David's. It's something you really notice when you've been brought up in London."

Of Britain's four patron saints, Dewi Sant is the only one actually born in the country he represents. Conceived by the Welsh nun, St Non, through the forced attentions of a local chieftain, the 6th-century saint was born in a supernatural thunderstorm, high above St Brides Bay, a mile and a half from the city that now bears his name.

The turbulent Dewisland, with sheer cliffs of 200 feet or more, is a continuation of the 200-mile Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Generations of seafarers have perished upon

FACT FILE

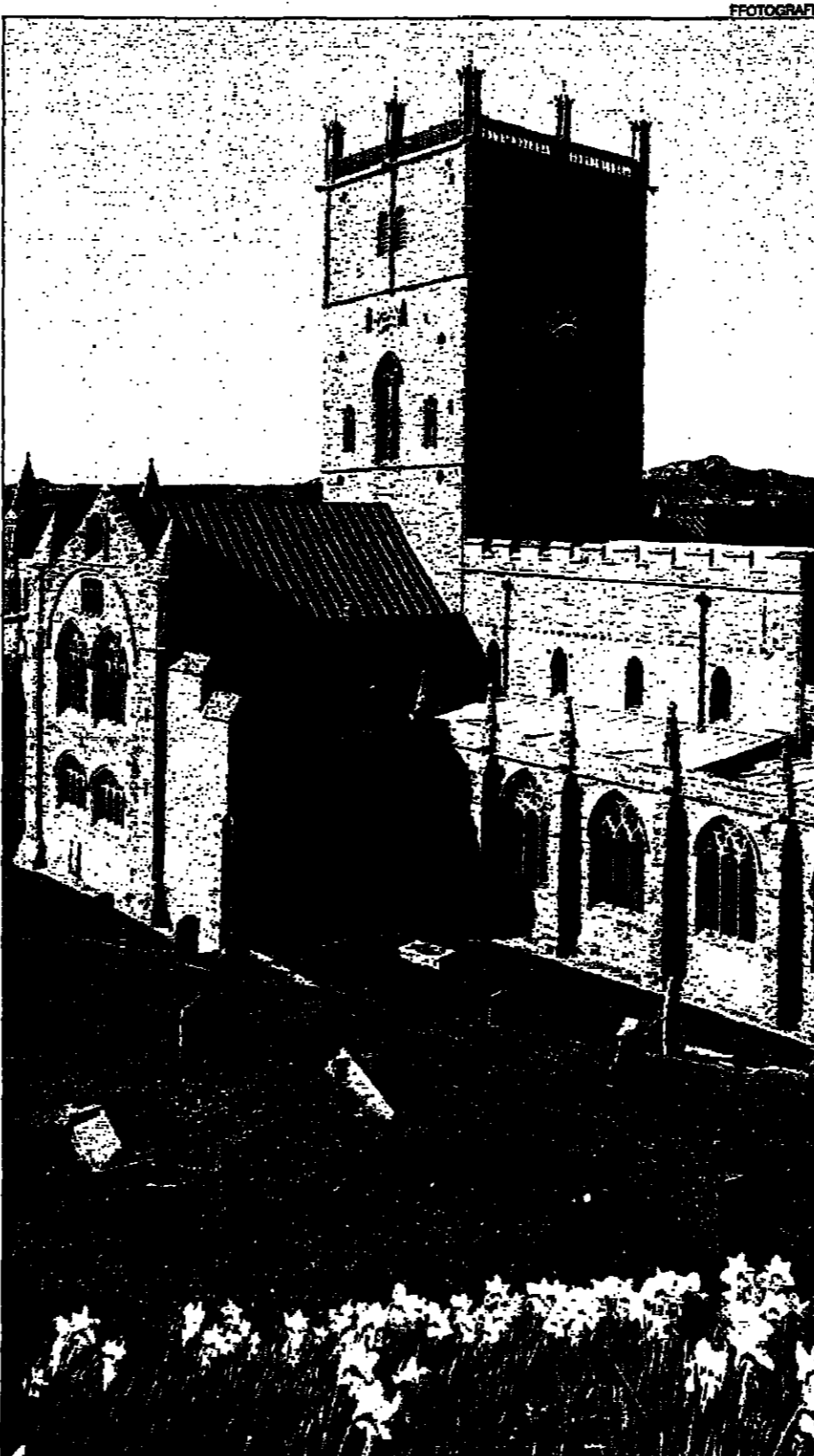
■ Brian Pedley visited St David's as a guest of the Wales Tourist Board, Department ED, PO Box 1, Cardiff CF1 2QN. For a free brochure, *The View of Wales*, call 01222 494473. Pembrokeshire Tourism & Leisure Services has a 24-hour brochure line (0990-103103).

■ Where to stay: Warpool Court Hotel, St David's, Pembrokeshire SA62 6BN (01437 720330). Luxury 25-room hotel, with spectacular coastal views; dinner, bed and breakfast from £66 per person per night. St Non's Hotel, St David's, Pembrokeshire SA62 6RJ (01437 720239). Two-star, 22-room hotel peacefully located near St David's Cathedral and Bishop's Palace. Easy walking to National Park Coastal Path and beaches. B&B £35-541 per person per night.

■ Attractions: Bishops Palace (01437 720517). Open in winter 9.30am-4pm, Monday to Saturday, and 2-4pm on Sundays. In summer (April 6-October 24) it is open daily 9.30am-6.30pm. Admission: adults £1.70; children £1.20. This includes entry to two permanent exhibitions, models, reconstructions, interactive displays. St David's Cathedral (01437 720202) open daily. Admission free, but donations requested for upkeep. As St David's Day falls on the first Sunday of Lent this year, a special service will be held in Welsh on Tuesday at 8am. Usual services on Sunday although Ivor Rees, the former bishop of St David's, will be preaching at Evensong at 6pm.

■ Information: The Tourist Information Centre and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Visitor Centre is open all the year round at City Hall, St David's (01437 720392).

■ Further reading: *St David of Dewisland* by Nona Rees (J.D. Lewis, £3.95). *Ordnance Survey Coastline Leisure Maps 35 and 36* cover St David's and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.



Prayerful place: St David's Cathedral, traditional shrine of the Welsh patron saint

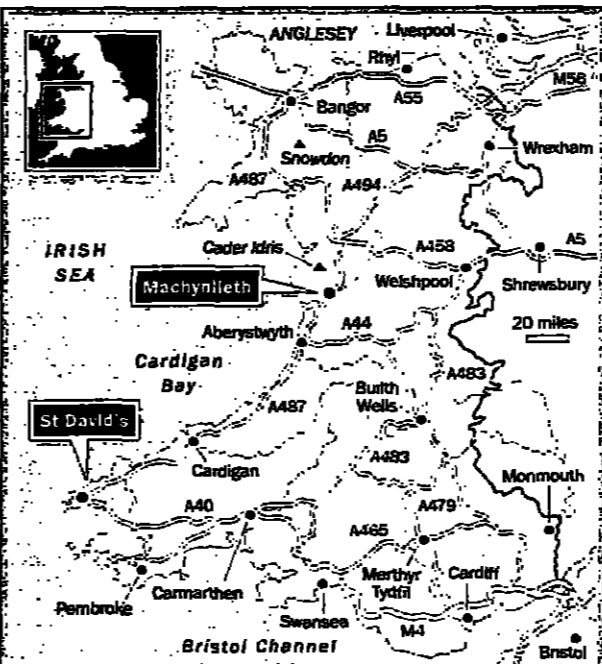
the treacherous outcrops known as Bishops and Clerks. At David's birth, it is said that crystal waters suddenly surged from the ground while water from his baptism splashed and healed a bishop's blindness. Ever now, the shrine of St Non's holy well is still highly regarded for its restorative powers. The nearby ruins of St Non's Chapel also mark this as a special place in Welsh lore.

In St David's itself, a flight of steps known as the 39 Articles leads down to the mother church on the valley floor, beneath the outcrops and medieval farmsteads. This magnificent, late 12th-century cathedral is part of an unbroken link with the patron saint and more than 1,500 years of pilgrimage. The adult Dewi arrived in

the valley of Mynyw, as it was then called, to find it in the grip of Irish bandits. According to Rhysyfarch, the 11th-century Welsh historian, the Irish women tried unsuccessfully to divert David and his monks by stripping off their clothes and "displaying love's seductive embraces".

There, among the marshes and ravens, David established a monastic settlement where devotion was taken to extremes. "David never allowed the use of oxen for ploughing," says the Very Reverend Wyn Evans, archaeologist and Dean of St David's. "His monks had to put the yokes upon their own shoulders. David lived on water and herbs and expected his communities to do the same. To subdue the flesh, they went into the sea up to their necks, reaching palms."

So blessed was David that once, when he addressed his flock, the ground beneath him rose into a hill so the worshippers could have a better view. So eloquent was the sermon that the Holy Spirit, in the form of a white dove, settled on his shoulder. Dewi Sant apparently lived for 147 years. He died on March 1, 589, as the first Primate of Wales. His shrine developed into one of Europe's great places of pilgrimage — William I, Henry



II and Edward I all knelt at St David's sacred relics. The bones have long since disappeared, but the cathedral continues to draw the faithful from all over the world. Across a footbridge, the rambling atmospheric ruins of the Bishops Palace survive as testimony to the awesome power of the medieval church. The palace's great wheel window still

throws its strange shadows. Black Welsh cattle graze the same fields where David's monks toiled at the plough. To be there at choral evensong, when Welsh voices soar above the river's babble, is to experience the real spirit of St David's. "I am obsessed by the place," says Wyn Evans, the Dean. "It sums up what it is to be Welsh."

ards of service, the vessel comes equipped with the latest navigational aids, stabilisers, safety certified Solas 2000 and was refurbished in 1997, displaces 5,650 tons, with satellite communications, one sitting restaurant, two bars, fitness centre, laundry, entertainment lounge and swimming pool. There are 142 cabins all with ensuite facilities spread over 5 decks and she is fully air-conditioned.



A quiet chat on a quiet day outside Parliament House in Machynlleth, Wales

Legends live on in Welsh heartlands

While Cardiff and Swansea vie for the honour of housing the new Welsh Assembly, the citizens of Machynlleth look on with a certain smug detachment. Their tiny town was home to the original Welsh parliament almost six centuries ago.

Owen Glendower, lauded by Shakespeare in *King Henry IV* as "valiant as a lion and wondrous affable", chose to be crowned Prince of Wales in the town and established his parliament there in 1404. The charismatic prince, more properly known as Owain Glyndwr, led a popular revolt against the English king and united Wales in a way it had never been before and, some say, has never been since.

Halfway between Aberystwyth and Dolgellau, and a few miles inland from the Cardigan Bay coast, Machynlleth (pronounced Ma-ch-un-hi-eth) stands in a magical corner of mid-Wales between the drama of Snowdonia to the north and the hubbub of the industrialised south. The hills begin to gather around the single-line rail track after your train leaves Welshpool, and Machynlleth is hemmed in on all sides. To the north lies the magnificent Cader Idris. Anyone spending a night on its summit, it is said, will descend as either a poet or a madman.

The town is little more than two streets which meet in a picturesque T-junction. At its heart stands the Memorial Clock, in an 80ft stone structure. On Wednesday mornings, market stalls appear in the main street as they have done since the town was granted its charter in 1291. A proliferation of antiques and craft shops reflects the fact that tourism has supplanted agriculture and slate mining in the local economy. One specialises in jewellery fashioned from Welsh gold. Another was the first outpost in the Laura Ashley empire.

According to the last census, in 1991, 60 per cent of townspeople speak Welsh — a figure that rises sharply in the surrounding countryside. Regulars in the Wynnistay Arms in the heart of the town switch languages bewilderingly, but politeness decrees that when a stranger joins the company, conversation is in English.

Most buildings date from the 18th and 19th centuries, but three survive from medieval times. One of these is known as the Parliament House, but even Tecwyn Griffiths, the curator, cannot place his Grade I listed building within 40 years of that historic gathering, when four representatives from every district under Glyndwr's rule were summoned to Machynlleth.

The curator tells how Glyndwr was walking one morning on the hills near Valle Crucis when he met the



The mole hole: popular

FACT FILE

■ Alan Road travelled with the Wales Tourist Board: Mid-Wales Tourism 01654 702653. Wynnstay Arms Hotel (01654 702944); B&B from £27.50 per person. Celica exhibition (01654 702702); daily 10am-6pm; adults £4.65; children £3.50. Centre for Alternative Technology (01654 702400); daily 10am-6pm; adults £5; children £2.80. King Arthur's Labyrinth (01654 701884); open Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm; adults £4.10; children £2.95. Y Tabernacl Museum of Modern Art (01654 703355); Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm, free.

abbot. "You are up betimes, Master Abbot," said the prince. "May sire," replied the abbot. "It is you who have risen too early — by a hundred years."

Two of Glyndwr's ambitions — for a Welsh university and a church free of domination by Canterbury — were centuries before their time. His uprising was put down and his death is shrouded in mystery, as befits a legend expected to return one day in his country's hour of need.

Many in Machynlleth are grateful to him for becoming, posthumously, something of a tourist attraction. Another attraction is Celica, a permanent exhibition devoted to the 3,000-year-old culture that extended from the Atlantic to the Bosphorus and from Scotland to the Mediterranean.

Located in Y Plus (the Hall), this multimedia presentation was designed by John Sunderland, creator of the Jorvik Viking Centre in York.

A final display, which traces the survival of the Celtic spirit, makes some dubious links with the modern Eisteddfod and its associated Gorsedd of Bardis, an entirely 19th-century invention. A more traditional exhibition on the first floor includes books, maps, illustrations and replica artefacts. One ingenious box of tricks enables visitors to listen to the *Lord's Prayer* and someone counting from one to ten in six Celtic languages.

More contemporary examples of Welsh creativity are on display at Y Tabernacl, a 19th-century Methodist chapel that has been recycled as an arts and cultural centre. Films, music, festivals and drama are presented.

The Centre for Alternative Technology is a project that encourages modern man to leave a lighter footprint on the surface of our planet. Twenty years ago, a band of idealists colonised a former slate quarry to demonstrate ways of working with, rather than against, nature. Now some of their apparently eccentric proposals are entering the technological mainstream.

More than 50 exhibits demonstrate a variety of environmentally friendly projects, from solar panels to wind and water turbines which supply the centre's electricity. The most popular exhibit with children is the mole hole. Visitors negotiate a gloomy tunnel in which, like Alice, they appear to shrink and get a new perspective on tiny creatures such as worms and beetles.

In another former slate mine at Corris you can enjoy a subterranean boat ride into King Arthur's Labyrinth. More lifelike models in dramatically lit tableaux recount a host of legends about the ancient British king who just might have been a Welshman.

When you emerge, perhaps you understand more clearly why Owain Glyndwr fought so valiantly for his homeland. His parliament will be re-established in Cardiff or Swansea — Ron Davies, the Welsh Secretary of State, is due to make a decision within the month — but his spirit is here in the beauty of the mid-Wales hills and lakes.

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Taking the lines of least resistance

Travelling by rail is once more the fashionable way to see Europe. Katie Wood reveals the best deals

ON TRACK FOR EUROPE

GIVEN THE frequency of air traffic delays, the high price of short European flights and the recent hikes in UK airport departure taxes, it is little wonder that travellers are eagerly looking for alternatives back on terra firma. The main winners in this scenario are the European rail authorities, which have good reason to feel smug as we head for the new millennium.

As a way of getting around Europe, the train — in the Seventies thought of as "old hat" and a relic of the prejet days — is reasserting itself with increasing skill, speed and enterprise.

Before being classed as a train-spotting "anorak", let me take issue. A platform dweller I am not. I was just a typically broke, itchy-footed, newly-graduated lass when in 1981 I fell in love — with trains.

The early Eighties was the zenith of Inter-Railing and it was all I wanted to do, so I set off on an 18-month tour of Europe and much of North Africa. The fruit of my labours was the guidebook *Europe by Train*, now about to enter its sixteenth edition. *Inter-Rail* remains one of the biggest travel bargains out: a month of unlimited train travel in 28 countries for those under 26

for £259. The "senior" (over 26) equivalent in 1998 will cost you only £349.

European trains differ vastly from British ones. I'm glad to say. In Europe trains are a wonderfully sociable form of transport and a truly excellent way to slowly take stock of a country. Station by station, as locals come and go, you get the measure of the culture and climate.

We island-dwellers forget how small and how inter-linked Europe really is. This can be learned the easy or hard way. I once inadvertently opted for the latter and discovered the concept of dividing rolling stock in rather unfortunate circumstances.

The lesson I learned was that on no account should you walk to the next too if the one in your carriage is occupied. Such folly resulted in passport, money, husband, luggage and small baby going to Italy while, perched on ceramic, I was ceremoniously shunted into Switzerland.

Disasters aside though, this type of holiday can bring back the wanderlust to even the most jaded traveller.

Europe by Train 1998 is published in March by Ebury Press. Credit card orders: 01206 255800.



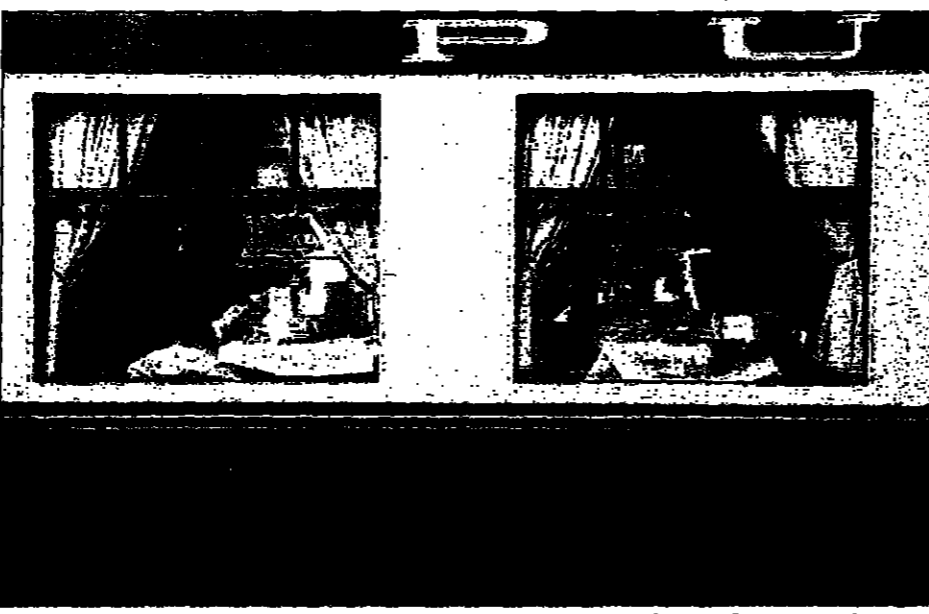
The art of rail travel comes to life at the Central Station, in Milan, where intriguing portraits of the Mona Lisa add to the attraction

NEW FOR 1998

BRITISH RAIL International, BR's former European ticket sales operation, has been bought out by SNCF which has merged it with its international operation in London to form Rail Europe, an organisation specialising in rail travel — including Eurostar — from the UK to the Continent.

- The over-26 Inter-Rail in 1998 will cover all zones of Europe: 28 countries for a month for £349.
- London to Brussels is now 2h40m on Eurostar. Onward journeys to Germany have also improved: London to Cologne is now 5h 30mins; Paris to Brussels is 1h 25m.
- For the World Cup, special trains and charters will supplement regular TGVs and Eurostars. The "12-25 Card" gives up to 30 per cent discount to under-26s. Motorail to Italy — a weekly service from Calais to Florence will run this summer.

THE ULTIMATE



The Orient-Express leaving Victoria station, London, bound for Istanbul

TIPS ON BOOKING

BEFORE buying a rail ticket for Europe it is worth asking if you are covered by a discount pass: holders of a British Rail Senior railcard, for example, can save 30 per cent on cross-border journeys if they spend £5 on a Rail Europe Senior Pass. Under-26s can choose from Eurodomino passes, Inter-Rail or individual country passes — the latter are also available to over-26s, and if touring a country in depth are well worth investigating.

■ One serious glitch in European train travel remains the booking system. Though far from perfect throughout Europe, it is even worse in Britain. Your best bet for clear information is the Thomas Cook European Rail Timetable (01733 503571

for a copy costing £9.90 including p&p) or the London-based specialist Rail Europe (0990 300003).

■ Other essential numbers include rail and youth travel specialist Wasteels 0171-834 7066; Eurostar 0345 303030 and Rail Europe 0990 300003, which has set up a section for football World Cup travel between UK and France (0870 904 4289).

■ Great Rail Journeys (01904 679969) offers train-based holidays in Norway, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, France and Spain. Its ten-day two-centre Bavarian Tour (departures June 3 and August 19), for example, costs £795 per person based on two sharing. Its 14-day Spain by Train (depart May 18) package costs £1,750.

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- Board the Orient-Express in Venice and hop off at Monte Carlo for a two-night stay before continuing on to Paris or London for £2,240.
- Travel two nights on the train from London to Rome followed by two nights in Rome for £2,020. Or overnight on the train from London to Florence and spend three days in the city from £1,960. All prices include five-star hotels, transfers, flights and excursions.
- For the adventurous, GW Travel of Altrincham (0161-928 9410) sells packages on the Trans Siberian, including a 25-day Steam Express from Moscow to Vladivostok. It costs £7,000, but excludes flights.
- A 16-day tour of Russia from the Black Sea to the Crimea costs £3,570.

Disney cruise postponed

THE maiden voyage of Disney's much-vaunted cruise liner *Disney Magic* was last week postponed for the second time.

Having called off the *Magic's* debut in March and put it back to April 30, the American entertainment corporation has now deferred the start-up to July 30 because of delays at the Fincantieri shipyard in Italy, where the 35,000-ton ship is under construction.

The three-month hiatus will affect 26 three and four-day cruises and up to 52,000 passengers. Although little more than 1,000 of those are likely to be British, it will affect ten UK tour operators, who must offer an alternative Disney World stay, a discounted cruise at a later date or a full refund.

DISNEY Cruise Line president Art Rodney insisted: "We will continue to work with the shipyard to overcome problems and ensure the ship meets its new maiden voyage date." The Fincantieri chairman Corrado Antonini added: "We regret our construction problems, aggravated by supplier shortages and poor weather conditions, have caused this delay."

The delay will do little for Fincantieri's reputation, which also suffered last year for the late delivery of Holland America Line's *Rotterdam V7*.

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MUGGING-UP: <http://www.travelshop.de/english/railway.htm> provides links to railway sites round the world, including the matchless European Railway Server, designed for travellers and transporters with colourful liveries, links and timetables. At <http://www.databay.com/train.html> a selection of guides can be ordered.

KER-CHING THE BEST DEALS: Steam in to <http://www.traveldiscounts.com/discount/rail/railindx.html> for FAQs (frequently asked questions), discounts and information — but note that prices are in US dollars. <http://www.eurorail.com> is a US site detailing cut prices online and offering a free Rail "Virgin" video, with tips on rail travel, with some purchases. Luxury minded travellers can check in with Destinations Unlimited — at <http://www.primenet.com/train/index.html> for the Orient-Express.

"WELL I NEVER!" Be more intrepid than your average Inter-Railer and check out the Balkan Rail links site at <http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/59761/balkrail.html> Or do the Kerouac thing at <http://catalog.com/hop/> and learn about freight-train hopping. Transporters can link to European spotting links on the Cyberspace World Railroad Directory at <http://www.rhstorica.com/nmrrail/wrail/an.html>

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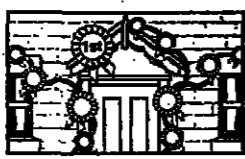
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Working Holidays 1998, published by the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, lists more than 100,000 jobs such as working on a sheep station in Australia...

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BRYN FRANK, editor of The Good Holiday Cottage Guide, has spent the past 17 years in search of the perfect holiday cottage...

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IMPORTANT commemorations are due from May for the 400th anniversary of the death of Philip II of Spain...



Will there ever be another ewe: there are thousands of holiday jobs available for the summer, including working on a sheep station in Australia

serviced as his palace, monastery and tomb. The exhibition, Philip II, a Monarch and his era: The Hispanic Monarchy, will run from May 30 to October 20 at El Escorial...

A BROCHURE from Cresta Holidays (0161-926 9999) will appeal to anyone who is allergic to football. "How to Avoid the World Cup" lists the dates of the matches and ten cities to avoid in France during June and July...

Orissa or Goa?

COULD the eastern Indian state of Orissa rival the charms of Goa and Kerala as a long-haul beach holiday destination? A new airport terminal was opened in January at Orissa's capital, Bhubaneswar...

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offer weekly sailings from Southampton to St Lucia, Dominica and St Vincent, with additional calls to other Caribbean islands. The round trip will last 25 days and cost £2,250 per person.

Charters delay takeoff

Airport delays are getting longer and passengers have not yet learnt how to avoid the departure-lounge blues. The Air Transport Users Council last week reported that average delays for charter flights had lengthened to 38 minutes last year.

Cheap flights can be a nightmare for travellers, says Steve Keenan



Holidaymakers are taking airport waits lying down

Charters operated by British Airways were in second spot with 17 minutes. The worst was Nordic European Airlines, which had one-third of flights running more than an hour late and an average delay of 86 minutes.

Book a flight that leaves early in the morning - the odds against a problem shorten during the day. Speak to friends and your travel agent. Horror stories about a particular airline should encourage you to book with another carrier.

Table with columns: City, Airline, Price. Includes destinations like Amsterdam, London, Edinburgh, etc.

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March 8th

The Times
Saturday March 14th

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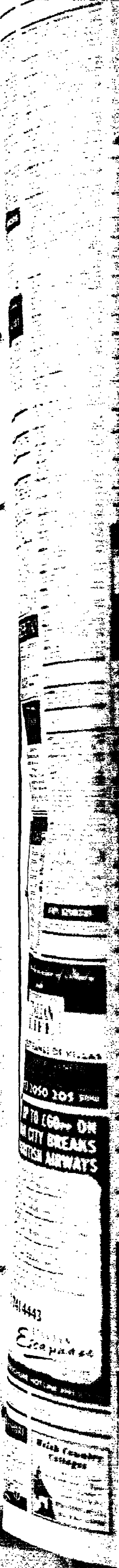
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MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

Q I attend a large number of drinks receptions, and I am irritated by the number of times I am interrupted in conversation by somebody else who appears to believe they have a prior claim to the attention of the person to whom I am talking. What should I say to my interrupter, without being rude myself? — R.J. Clarke, Chichester, West Sussex.

A Gently stand your corner with a pre-emptive strike. Quickly say: "We were just talking about Saddam Hussein. (or Bill Clinton, or the unseasonably warm weather)". In this way he will be obliged to enter into the existing conversation rather than starting his own.

Q Could you please disclose the correct protocol for becoming engaged. Does one ask the future father-in-law for permission to marry his daughter prior to proposing to the prospective bride, or does one ask the girl first, and then the father? I took the former option which resulted in a humorous situation where the father joyfully ran to his wife and my then girlfriend to announce my request, mistakenly thinking that I had already asked his daughter to marry me. We have joked about this since, but who was at fault here? — Timothy Hill, Wickham, Hants.



A Technically your future father-in-law was. The time-honoured protocol is for a man to seek the permission of his future wife's father before popping the question to her. However, in many cases these days the sequence is reversed, therefore your father-in-law can perhaps be excused.

Q Do you have advice on invitations issued at short notice? We are usually delighted to receive these, yet when we try to do likewise some people seem fussed and even resentful that we have not given them more notice. Also, the practice of "dropping in" without prior warning appears to have largely vanished. This, too, is a pity; it is easy to make an excuse if the caller is not welcome at that particular moment. What do you think? — A.F., West Sussex.

A Modern times have wrought a volte face in social attitudes to these two customs. Short-notice invitations, once considered rather rude, are now perfectly acceptable and generally life-enhancing. Calling, on the other hand, has almost entirely fallen out of favour.

Q We often have dinner parties of eight, as this number suits our dining room and table. However, eight at table is an awkward number. We like to sit host and hostess at opposite ends of an

oblong table, and that means that one cannot then sit lady and gentleman alternately. What is your advice? — Name and address withheld.

A The best solution is for only one of you to sit at the head of the table. The decision of whom is normally decided by the sex of the most important guest. If it is a man then the hostess takes the top position and if it is a woman then the host will. In this way the sexes remain separated and nobody is offended.

Q I recently stayed at a country mansion that had a butler. I found him very interesting but it was difficult to speak to him for anything longer than a single sentence. Is it improper to attempt to enter into conversation with a butler and how would one make a conversation extend to more than a single sentence? — Les Rowley

A It is not improper, but well trained butlers always aim to maintain a little professional distance with guests and thus tend to restrict their conversation. It is thoughtful to respect their wishes.

Q Two years ago my son married and some of the arrangements made for the wedding by his then prospective parents-in-law still rankle with me. It was a very luxurious wedding and 130 people were invited. My son and I were allowed only 25 invitations between us. I have three daughters, two of whom were bridesmaids, and they as well as my son and myself (I have no husband) were included in this number. My daughter-in-law was allocated ten invitations. In the church, guests were instructed to sit on either side. At one stage, my son made a mild complaint about the numbers and I had offered to help pay for the occasion, but this was all brushed aside. I felt he was being used by these people as a vehicle for their own private jamboree. After all, without my son (and me) there would have been no wedding. Were these people behaving correctly? — Name and address withheld.

A No, quite the reverse. The perfect wedding guest list should provide a balanced picture of the lives of the bride and groom and their families, with the ideal ratio being: one third the bride's parents' guests, one third the groom's parents' guests and one third friends of the bride and groom themselves. However, although adjustments to this ideal solution often have to be made, your daughter-in-law's family's behaviour was both incredibly selfish and incorrect.

Q The author is Associate Editor of GQ



WORD WATCHING

by Philip Howard

DISASSIEGE
a. To raise a siege
b. An armchair
c. To compare unfavourably

EMPYRE
a. To burn on a pyre
b. The Holy Byzantine Empire
c. To make worse

EVAL
a. Wicked
b. A girl's name
c. Age-old

DUGONG
a. A Burmese gong
b. A water mammal
c. A hollowed-out tree canoe

Answers on page 39

TWO BRAINS

by Raymond Keene

IN April 1847, Johann Martin Dase was reported as having achieved the following calculations: multiplying two 20-digit numbers in six minutes, two 48-digit numbers in 40 minutes and, incredibly, two 100-digit numbers together in 8½ hours (all these calculations performed mentally).

Question 1: Which of these words does not belong with the others? CIVIC, FEWER, RADAR, LEVEL and REFER

Question 2: In a restaurant a man orders a meal and a drink. The bill comes to £11. If the meal costs £10 more than the drink, how much does the drink cost?

Answers on page 39

CROSS WORDS

by Brian Greer

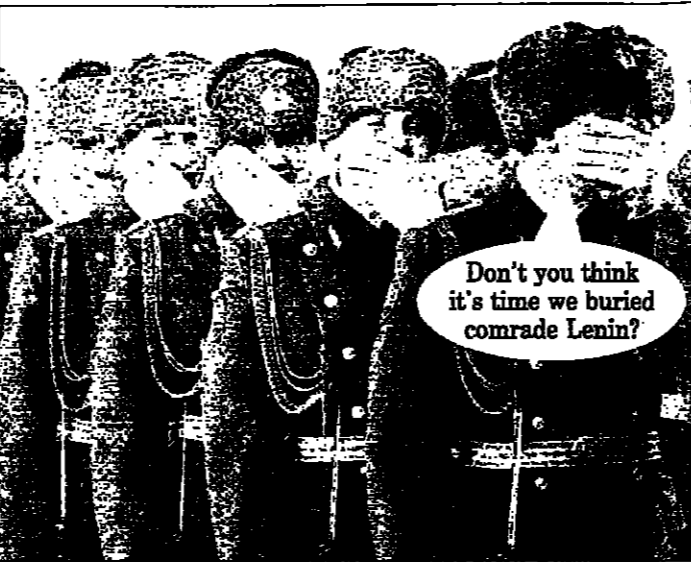
I'm currently on study leave at the University of Washington in Seattle, whence information technology makes it as easy to send crosswords and columns to the Times as from Belfast. As Mike Laws discussed last week, computers are valuable tools for crossword composers and editors. In the next few weeks I will be test-driving and critiquing more software aids for setters and solvers. However, today I want to devote some cross words to the developments at the Daily Telegraph to which Mike referred. It has, apparently, been decided that their crossword grids will henceforth be assembled by machines, largely using recycled clues. The function of

the erstwhile contributors will be reduced to supplying single clues for listed words. Clearly, money can be saved in this way; even more could be saved by abandoning crosswords entirely. I believe this bizarre experiment is doomed to failure. A crossword, like many works of art and craft, is greater than the sum of its parts. Even if the proposal was to apply sophisticated Artificial Intelligence (and it appears that it is not), the state words to the developments at the Daily Telegraph to which Mike referred. It has, apparently, been decided that their crossword grids will henceforth be assembled by machines, largely using recycled clues. The function of

tions of the Telegraph's solvers and the wider crossword community to the resulting gallimattury. Moreover, the action is unfair to the contributors. The composers of crosswords are dedicated to their art form: their creations are harmless diversions that afford a little education and a lot of pleasure, and a legitimate source of intellectual pride. To expect such creative individuals to churn out clues on an assembly line is insulting. If you want to write to me directly, the address is 1060 NE 98 St, Seattle, WA 98115 and e-mail is bgreer@u.washington.edu

The writer is Crossword Editor of The Times

PICTURE LINE



READERS are invited to suggest what Chris Smith, Culture Minister, might be saying while being embraced by a feather boa.

This picture, recently printed in The Times, will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted.

Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, March 4.

Last week's winning caption, left, was submitted by Mr D.J. House, of Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire.



QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"You bastards, what are you doing? You'll be getting Shula pregnant next." — Archers fan reacting to the death of John Archer
"They make such an issue of being a young government and yet they are taking away a fundamental right of being young." — Blair lead singer Damon Albarn protesting at Labour's plans for higher education
"We are not a Winter Games nation." — Simon Clegg, chief executive of the British

Olympic Association — Britain came last in the medal-winners table
"They should give Sean a peerage." — Sir John Mills on the controversy about giving Sean Connery a knighthood
"We have a deal." — Kofi Annan's spokesman (Sunday)
"If cricket wants to face the future, it must let the ladies into Lord's." — The Guardian on MCC decision not to admit women

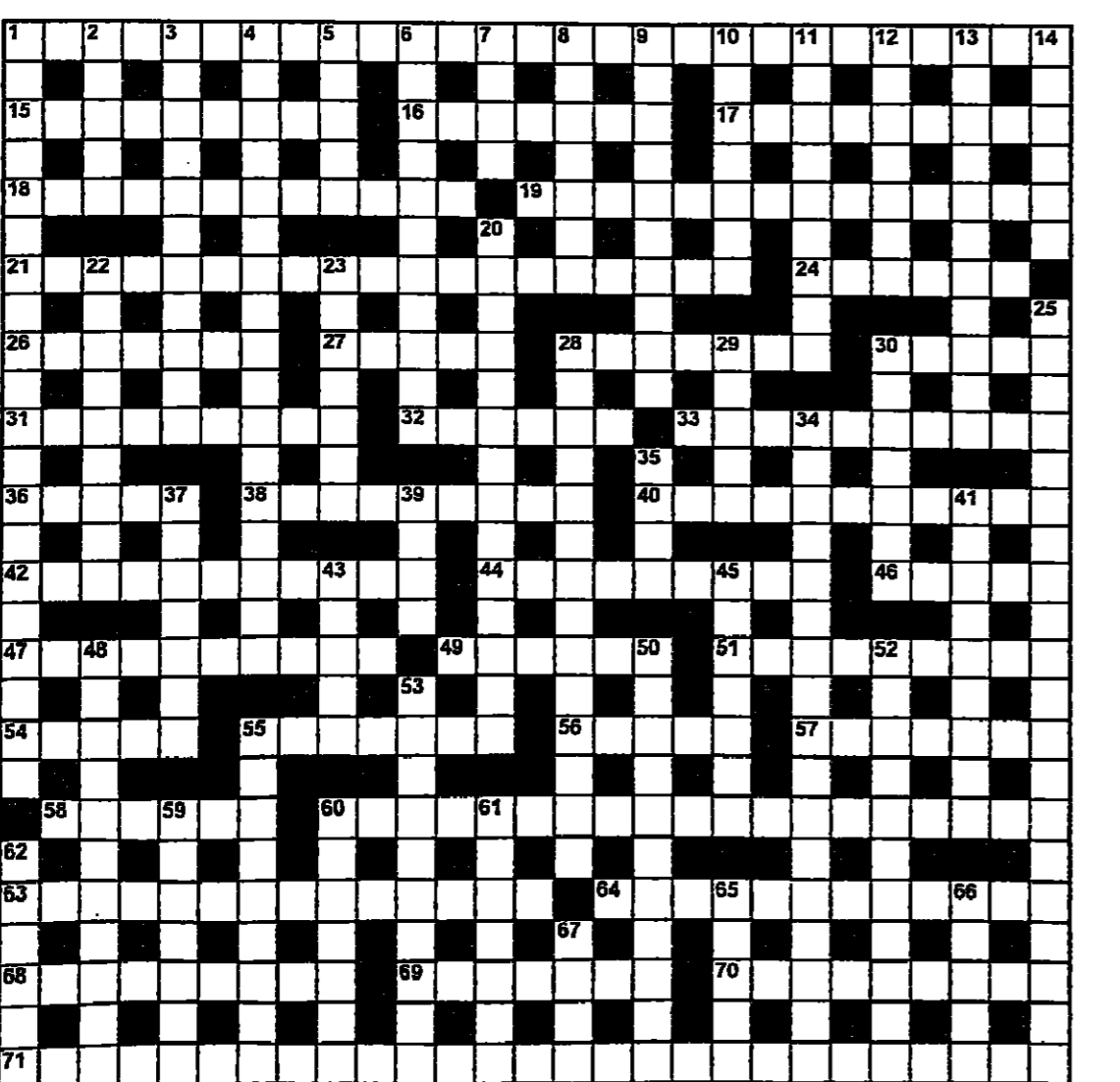
"A fantastic day out." — Tony Blair on the Millennium Dome
"If it is a failure we will never be forgiven." — Peter Mandelson on the Dome
"This insane piece of statist grandiloquence." — Playwright David Hare on ditto
"An oversight." — Conservative Central Office on William Hague's failure to tax a car bought for his wife
"An initial outlay of 50p has become the

answer to my prayers." — Anonymous woman who bought a brooch for 50p and sold it for £13,225
"Now that cinemas are offering some great British films, I have returned to their seats." — John Redwood (Guardian Media 23/2)
"They do not come much bigger than this." — Sir Elton John after being knighted by the Queen

JUMBO CROSSWORD 153

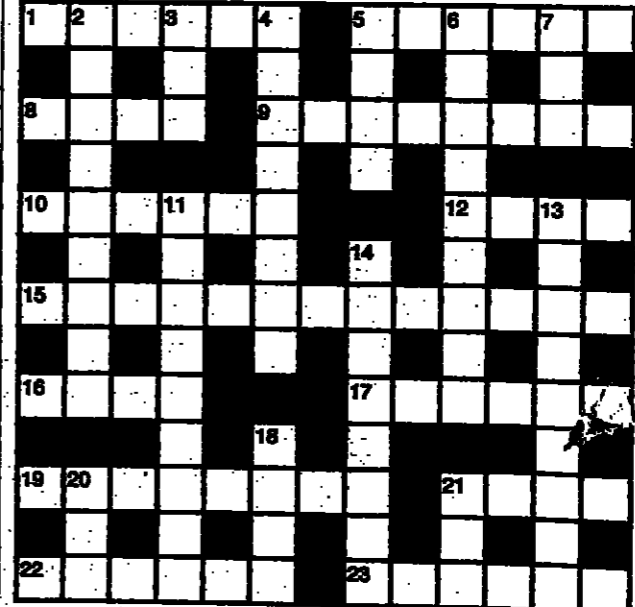


The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from black resin with a gold-plated clip, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to: Jumbo Crossword 153, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN to arrive by Thursday, March 12. The name of the winner will be published in Weekend on March 14



- ACROSS
1 Example of glass house inhabitant throwing a stone — on the range? (3,3,7,3,6,5)
15 Stories, ten or less, in a miscellany (9)
16 You want a tree? Here's a bribe to accept the one we grew (7)
17 Off round the world, taking everything in (9)
18 Everyone has to band together with crazy nerts in the thick of it (3,3,6)
19 Wholesale shop — once cash is put into it (14)
21 Officer discovers place, with occupant, to take over for military use out east (10-9)
24 Top conductor no good without private secretary (6)
26 Volume control adjusted indoors (7)
27 Fells Arab invaders (5)
28 Set out — rushed back at speed (7)
30 Mormon metal-worker (5)
31 Egyptian watercolour? (4,5)
32 A lot of heads of schools often make ushers curtail holidays (2,4)
33 Wagers, in other words, bring in nothing to invest (3,5,2)
36 Open next closing time (5)
38 Coppers see Henry, a criminal, hiding piano (9)
40 Revolutionary angered mild liberal (5-6)
42 To airlines, a reorganisation means to eliminate essentials (11)
44 Minister's responsibility for investments (9)
46 Fix up Frenchman with wife (5)
47 Calling for foreign rule (10)
49 Troublesome king in drawing (6)
51 I cut atlas about — I deal with reality (9)
54 Capek's play about the French king (5)
55 There are thirty-one such calls for help (7)
56 Applause for such as "Major Barbara" in Perth (5)
57 Some women, for certain, impress (7)
58 Spinster's initial inverted in nuptial agreement (6)
60 Indian star collapsed in airless place (5,4,2,3)
63 Burglar specialising in furniture? He has a much younger partner (6-8)
64 Romantic actor descended from moorland clan (6,6)
68 So it is about to be included in criminal's condemnation (9)
69 I will turn to somebody's advantage (3,4)
70 Charge with wrongdoing, as they said of old (9)
71 Accept the truth — if you do so, it may damage your health (3,4,2,4,4,3,5,2)
DOWN
1 I've served — now it's up to you (3,4,2,2,4,5)
2 Crack up without tax being reduced (5)
3 Writer Jules becoming 'eaten' about depleting fish stocks (11)
4 Promising bridge bid, being without spades (8,4,5)
5 Partly analysing what can break cells down (5)
6 This month police force rises, they tell us (11)
7 Disease caused by empty alimentary canal (4)
8 Note rising woman getting shout of praise (7)
9 Kitted park out, but concealed it (4,2,4)
10 Transport sailor after calling in service doctors (7)
11 Girl with unfinished duties collapsed in weariness (9)
12 By mistake I invested in most of worst fruit (7)
13 External aid required to synthesise chrysoleryl (11)
14 Rig trap up for cat (6)
20 These could be a source of inspiration to people intent on setting up kids' environment (9,5)
22 Bond, having lost head, covers up desperate admission (9)
23 So-called bird left with new ring on (7)
25 Challenge that went wrong held out indefinitely (5,4,3,8)
28 It releases enormous energy and foils insurance fraud (7,7)
29 Red Robin in song (5)
30 Prophet about to expire, being more under the weather (7)
34 Test the water — do a topographical survey (3,3,3,4,4)
35 Sign on staff, filling two thirds of openings (6)
37 Actor — one given to swearing, we hear (7)
39 Pope, for instance, joins others in a protest (4)
41 Old coin — a penny — and one new penny, with defect (9)
43 Evergreen plant variegated with gold and cream (5)
45 Start with shed at bottom of meadow (4,3)
48 I believe in acquiring dependencies — Caribbean port's one put on a roll (11)
50 As I'm into modern pop, this could be one I'd dodge (6,5)
52 Fan untypically spelled trouble, with line-out at either end lost, starting fuss (11)
53 A chessman's not usually given to drink (10)
55 I take part in downhill run, in brand-new clothing (9)
59 What Molly Malone had to do sounds inconsiderate (7)
60 Hindu's real self after he died turned up as a gondolier (7)
61 King and knight (an evasive person) offered Queen support in church (7)
62 Policeman arrests champion, one climbing cold mountain top (6)
63 Tree in the role of writer (5)
65 Film in which doctor has to compete (5)
67 Noise made by vital little bird (4)

TWO CROSSWORD



- No 1341
ACROSS
1 Attack; demand (price) (6)
5 Alter; odd coins (6)
8 Rain; a little; tongue of land (9)
9 Make way across (8)
10 Rupert — war poet (6)
12 Restricted food intake (4)
15 Satisfyingly appropriate deserts (6,7)
16 Only; pond (4)
17 Fortification; move in chess (6)
19 Opportunity; special event (8)
21 Expelled air (4)
22 Coordinated fire; tennis shot (6)
23 Ladies' leggings (6)
DOWN
2 Exaggeration (in speech) (9)
3 Groove (in soft track) (8)
4 Dig in (8)
5 Stuff full (4)
6 Amusing personal stories (9)
7 Matter in least dense form (3)
11 Very alert, aware (2,3,4)
13 Splendid (9)
14 Concise and clear (8)
18 Devious (4)
20 Call like dove (3)
21 Marshland (3)
SOLUTION TO NO 1340
ACROSS: 2 Probable 6 Safari 8 Flying 9 Bespoke 10 Argot 12 Impudence 16 Nip and tuck 18 Quits 20 Get away 21 Assail 22 Senior 23 Sunshine
DOWN: 1 Palermo 2 Picked up 3 Balzac 4 Bring 5 Eighth 7 Apparent 11 Restrain 13 Nonsense 14 Octagon 15 Squaws 17 Isaiah 19 These

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